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THE IMPACT OF SOME MAHĀYĀNA CONCEPTS

ON SINHALESE BUDDHISM

~~With Special Reference to Sinhalese Literary~~
~~Sources up to the Fifteenth Century~~

By

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Abstract

This study attempts to examine the influence of some specific Mahāyāna concepts on Sinhalese Buddhism. The first chapter serves as a historical backdrop to the inflow of various non-orthodox movements into Ceylon and records the continuous impact of the Mahāyāna on the Theravāda from the earliest times. The second chapter deals with the development of the concept of the threefold bodhi and examines in some detail the way in which the goal of Ceylon Buddhism shifted from the Theravāda arahantship to the Mahāyāna ideal of Buddhahood. Furthermore it suggests that this new ideal was virtually absorbed into Ceylon Buddhism. The next chapter discusses the Mahāyāna doctrines of trikāya, vajrakāya, śūnyatā, karuṇā and prajñā as adopted by Sinhalese writers without much concern for the philosophical import which these par excellence Mahāyāna concepts had for Mahāyānists themselves. The fourth chapter is devoted to a discussion of particular emphasis given to the cult of Maitreya which was stimulated by the Mahāyāna. The growth of the concept of the ten Bodhisattvas and of innumerable Buddhas is also

examined. The fifth chapter treats at length the worship of Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas. It tends to show how certain deities underwent various metamorphoses; local gods began in time to be worshipped as Mahāyāna gods, and Mahāyāna gods had lost their identity and merged with local gods. The last chapter deals with the development of the Bodhisattva ideal of kingship in Ceylon and countries in South East Asia. It also compares the nature of this cult in these countries with that which prevailed in Ceylon. It contends that the cult first developed in Ceylon and was used as an instrument for the legitimization of the king's authority. Thus it rejects the conventional view that the fall of the Khmer empire was the result of the introduction of Sinhalese Buddhism there.

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Abbreviations

A.	Aṅguttara Nikāya
Abhss.	Abhidharmārhthasaṅgrahasannaya
Anāgv.	Anāgatavaṃsa
ASCAR.	Archeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report
ASCMem	Archeological Survey of Ceylon, Memoir
ASIAR.	Archeological Survey of India, Annual Report
AsP.	Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā
BEFEO.	Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient
BRWW.	Buddhist Records of the Western World by S. Beal
Bv.	Buddhavaṃsa
CCMT.	Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times by W. Geiger
CII.	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
CJHS.	The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies
CJSG.	Ceylon Journal of Science-Section G
CTBC.	A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon.
D.	Dīgha Nikāya
DAG.	Dhampiyā Aṭṭuvā Gāṭṭapadaya
Daśa.	Daśabhūmikasūtra
DhpA.	Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā
Divy.	Divyāvadāna
Dv.	Dīpavaṃsa
EB.	Encyclopaedia of Buddhism
EIB.	Études sur l'iconographie bouddhique de l'Inde
ERE.	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
EZ.	Epigraphia Zeylanica

GAP.	The God of Adam's Peak by S.Paranavitana
HB.	Hinduism and Buddhism by Charles Eliot
HIL.	A History of Indian Literature by W.Winternitz
IBI.	The Indian Buddhist Iconography by B.Bhattacharyya
IHQ.	The Indian Historical Quarterly
J.	Jātaka
JA.	Journal Asiatique
JRAS.	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JRASCB.	Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
Kmv.	Karmavibhāgaya
Laṅk.	Laṅkāvatārasūtra
M.	Majjhima Nikāya
MMC.	Mahāyāna Monuments in Ceylon by N. Mudiyanse
Mhvu.	Mahāvastu
Miln.	Milindapañha
Mv.	Mahāvamsa
Ns.	Nikāyaśaṅgrahaya
Pjv.	Pūjāvaliya
PTSD.	Pali Text Society Dictionary
PTSJ.	Pali Text Society Journal
Pug.	Puggalapaññatti
S.	Saṃyutta Nikāya
S.Anāgv.	Sinhala Anāgatavaṃsaya
Sdlk.	Saddharmālaṅkāraya
Sdmp.	Saddharmapūṇḍarīkasūtra
Śikṣa.	Śikṣāsamuccaya

Sn.	Suttanipāta
SnA.	Suttanipāta Aṭṭhakathā
Srtnk.	Saddharmaratnākaraya
Srtnv.	Saddharmaratnāvaliya
Śsp.	Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā
SUD.	The Shrine of Upulvan at Devundara by S.Paranavitana
Sūtrāl.	Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra
Th.	Theragāthā
ThA.	Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā
Ud.	Udāna
UHC.	History of Ceylon, University of Ceylon
UCR.	University of Ceylon Review
Vm.	Visuddhimagga

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Introduction

The tradition of Buddhism in Ceylon has been considered by many writers and scholars to be the most orthodox amongst the various schools. It has also been held by Buddhists in Ceylon and even in foreign lands that Sinhalese Buddhism is the most authentic in that it has fundamentally preserved intact the basic tenets preached by the Buddha himself.

The present thesis attempts to examine the opposite view, namely that Ceylon Buddhism was exposed to many non-Theravāda influences (mainly of Mahāyānist origin). The question of the total impact of non-Theravāda traditions on Sinhalese Buddhism is vast in scope and complex and remains open to further research. In this paper we shall limit our concern to some of the specific aspects of Mahāyānism which have sufficiently influenced Sinhalese literature.

We will deal in some detail with the impact of such Mahāyāna concepts as the ideal of Buddhahood, the trikāya, vajrakāya, śūnyatā, karuṇā, prajñā, manopraṇi-
dhāna, and the worship of future Buddhas. We have also

traced the growth of the cult of Mahāyāna gods in Ceylon as well as the development of the Bodhisattva ideal of kingship. Concepts such as pāramitā or bhakti which did have a definite impact on the development of Ceylon Buddhism are for reasons of scope not considered here.

The pioneer in exploring the Mahāyāna influence in Ceylon was S. Paranavitana whose essay 'Mahāyānism in Ceylon' published in the Ceylon Journal of Science, 1928 provides a general survey of the field. Paranavitana's subsequent articles in the History of Ceylon Vol. I, pts. i and ii, sponsored by the University of Ceylon (published Colombo, 1959-60) also contain valuable information on the subject.

Mahāyāna sculpture has been dealt with by two writers, namely D.K. Doñanian and N. Mudiyanse in Mahāyāna Buddhist Sculpture of Ceylon (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University U.S.A. 1964) and Mahāyāna Monuments in Ceylon (published Colombo, 1967). Walpola Rahula's History of Buddhism in Ceylon, (published Colombo, 1956) and R.A.L.H. Gunawardana's History of Buddhist Saṅgha in Ceylon from the time of Sena I to the invasion of Māgha, 800-1215 A.D., (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1965) also

deserve mention.

Two Sinhalese works of a semi-popular nature, namely Lakdiya Mahāyāna Adahas by Moraṭuве Sāsanaratana (published Colombo, 1952) and Mahāyānaya by Attuḍāve Rāhula and Baṃbarānde Mahānāma (published Colombo, 1954) have also briefly treated Mahāyāna ideas in Ceylon.

The Sinhalese literature up to the fifteenth century constitutes the primary source on which this thesis has drawn. The bulk of the material used in this study derives from the following works: Pūjāvaliya and Karmavibhāgaya of the thirteenth century, Anāgatavamsaya of the fourteenth century, Saddharmālaṅkāraya and Saddharmaratnākaraya of the fifteenth century. In our treatment of the Mahāyāna concepts depicted in Ceylonese works, we have attempted to trace their original rudiments in the Pali canonical, commentatorial and other post-canonical works and the fuller development of these concepts in the Sanskrit literature, mainly that of the Mahāyānists. An attempt has also been made to examine the degree to which these concepts were absorbed into Sinhalese Buddhism.

Other important sources are the Pali chronicles of

Ceylon, i.e. the Mahāvamsa and Cūlavamsa, and the fourteenth-century Sinhalese work on the history of Buddhism in Ceylon, the Nikāyaśaṅgrahaya. Inscriptions as well as sculptural remains found in Ceylon provide a good deal of evidence for a flourishing cult of Bodhisattvas and the study and veneration of the texts of Mahāyāna doctrines, from the seventh through the tenth century.

The travel records by pilgrims like Fa-hsien, and Hsüan-tsang and other foreign works such as those by Tāranātha and I-tsing also shed some light on the 'non-orthodox' traditions in Ceylon. Another source of Mahāyānism in Ceylon is seen in the biographies of Āryadeva, and in the Chinese records on Amoghavajra and Vajrabodhi. There are, in addition, inscriptions found in India, Burma, Thailand and Cambodia which have been helpful in the research for the present paper.

Chapter I

Historical Survey

In this chapter we hope to present a broad outline of 'unorthodox' influences mainly of Mahāyāna origin in the history of religion in Ceylon. This chapter intends to show that Mahāyāna influence started very early and has continued throughout the ages.

It is not our intention to explore here in detail the dynamics of the interaction of the various movements that entered the country with the existing orthodox traditions. Nor will we discuss in this chapter the minutiae in religious thought and practices in the country. Such concerns are left for the following chapters. However, certain aspects of the Mahāyāna influence that are not examined in detail in the subsequent chapters are examined here in the chronological order of their occurrence.

The history of Ceylon as recorded in the Pali chronicles is from the ideological viewpoint of the orthodox Theravāda; there is, however, no such history of the country which would reflect the Mahāyāna or the

'non-orthodox' Weltanschauung. Only occasional references to the latter viewpoints can supply the necessary material for a reconstruction of a history of ideas in Ceylon measured in terms of her 'non-orthodox' tradition. Similarly epigraphic records in the island occasionally provide information on Mahāyāna institutions and practices just as do some sculptures.

The first mention in the Theravāda records of the Mahāyāna tendencies occurs during the time of Vohārika Tissa (209-231 A.D.) when a new sect of Buddhism known as Vetullavāda or Vetulyavāda (Sk. and Sin. Vaitulyvāda) found its way into Ceylon. The king is said to have suppressed the Vetullavāda and made the 'true doctrine' to shine forth in glory¹. From the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya, the fourteenth century work which narrates the history of Buddhism in Ceylon, we learn that it was the monks of the Abhayagiri monastery of the Dhammaruci sect who adopted the Vaitulya Pitaka which was composed by the 'infidel Brahmans' at the time of Dharmāśokamahārāja 'for the purpose of destroying the religion'. Further it says, that the king hearing from his minister Kapila who had exhaustively studied all branches of knowledge

1. Mv., 36.41.

that they were not the true word of the Buddha, burnt the Vaitulya texts and 'disgraced' the sinful priests.¹ It is important to remember here that Vohārika Tissa was an ardent supporter of both the vihāras, Mahāvihāra and Abhayagiri.²

The Vetulyakas who were known in Ceylon are generally identified with the Mahāyānists. However, the term vaitulya is not known in Sanskrit lexicons and its etymology is still obscure.³ The term vaipulya is commonly used as a designation for Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the Prajñāpāramitā and the Saddharmapundarīka.⁴ But we find that besides vaipulya, the term vaitulya is also used.

H. Kern came across the term vaitulya in the fragmentary manuscript of the Saddharmapundarīka discovered in Kaşgar in Central Asia. Since vaipulya and vaitulya appeared to be synonymous terms in the Saddharmapundarīka, he held that the Vaitulyavādins of Ceylon were Mahāyānists.⁵ This view was rejected by Keith on the

1. Ns., p.12.

2. Mv., 36.31-33.

3. Cf. PTSD.; Franklin Edgerton, Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar & Dictionary, Vol.II.

4. H. Kern, Manual of Indian Buddhism, Strassburg 1896, pp.4ff.

5. H.Kern, 'Vaitulya, Vetulla, Vetulyaka', Verslagen en

grounds that the reading of the Kaşgar manuscript could be a blunder of the copyist.¹ But manuscripts older than the Kaşgar manuscript in which the term vaitulya occurs were found later and N.D. Mironov proved with the help of Chinese sources that vaitulya was older than vaipulya.² Bunyiu Nanjio says that the forms fang-têng means literally 'a square-even or equal'.³ Dharmarakṣa who did the earliest translation of the Saddharmapundarikā into Chinese (286 A.D.)⁴ often used this term fang-têng in passages where there occurs (Mahā) vaipulyasūtra. Kumārajīva, (400-2 A.D.) and Jñānagupta and Dharmagupta (601 A.D.) on the other hand, used the form Ta-chên-ching, meaning Mahāyāna sūtra. As fang may mean 'direction, separate', it looks like a translation of Sanskrit vi-; têng meaning 'even, equal' corresponds to Sk. tulya. Mironov is inclined to believe that Dharmarakṣa etymologized vaitulya as a vrddhi -

Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie von Wetenschappen, Letterk., 4^e R., D. VIII, Amsterdam 1907 pp.312-319.

reviewed by L de la Vallée Poussin, JRAS., 1907, pp.432-434,

1. A.B.Keith, Buddhist philosophy in India and Ceylon, Oxford, 1923, p.157, n.1.

2. The following information is taken from 'Buddhist Miscellanea' JRAS., 1927, pp.241ff.

3. Catalogue, Col.391

4. Saddharmapundarikāsūtra, ed.N.Dutt, Introduction, p.XIV.

formation of vitulya whereas vaitulya is a sanskritized Prakrit vetulla (or vetulya). Fang-têng occurs for the first time in the second century A.D. and for the last time at the end of the sixth century A.D. while fang-kuang, the term for Mahā-vaipulya, is not used earlier than the middle of the fourth century A.D.

We may now examine here some of the references made to the term vaitulya in the relevant literature. According to the Abhidharmasammuccaya (fourth century A.D.) of Asaṅga, the three terms vaipulya, vaidalya and vaitulya convey the same meaning.

"Vaipulyaṃ katamat? Bodhisattvapitakasampra-yuktaṃ bhāṣitaṃ. Yad ucyate vaipulyaṃ tad vaidalyam api ucyate vaitulyam apy ucyate. Kimarthaṃ vaipulyam ucyate. Sarvasattvānāṃ hitasukhādhiṣṭhānataḥ, udāragambhīradharmadeśanātaś ca. Kimarthaṃ ucyate vaidalyaṃ, Sarvāvaraṇavidālanataḥ. Kimarthaṃ ucyate vaitulyam. Upamānadharmāṇāṃ tulanābhāvataḥ."¹

(What is vaipulya? Sayings composed of the Bodhisattvapitaka. What is called vaipulya is also called vaidalya and vaitulya. Why is it called vaipulya? Because it is the repository of the good and happiness of all beings and because it contains the noble and profound discourses. Why is it called vaidalya? Because it splits all obstacles asunder.

1. Abhidharmasammuccaya, ed. Pralhad Pradhan, Santiniketan, 1950, p.79.

Why is it called vaitulya? Because it examines the [proper] comparisons.)

In the same work, the vaipulyadharma is contrasted with the śrāvakadharma.

"Kena kāraṇena vaipulyadharṃ dhūpamālyādibhiḥ pūjyo na tathā śrāvakadharṃ. Sarvasattvāhitāsukhādhiṣṭhānatām upādāya."¹

(Why is vaipulyadharma worshipped with incense and garlands and not the śrāvakadharma? Because it is the repository of the good and happiness of all beings.)

The term vaitulya also occurs in the Candrapradīpa-sūtra quoted by Śāntideva in his Śikṣāsamuccaya.²

"Prathamam vācā bhāṣeyā na ahaṃ Vaitulyaśikṣitaḥ"
(... first say unto them, I am not taught in the greater Scripture.)

Bendall has translated the term vaitulyaśikṣitaḥ as 'taught in the greater scripture': since the Tibetan term rab-rgyas-dag-gis-bslabs means 'taught by those

1. Ibid., p.85.

2. Śikṣāsamuccaya, ed. C. Bendall, Bibliotheca Buddhica 1, St. Petersburg, 1897-1902. p.354, line 6.

In the corresponding footnote vaitulya is explained as a Vaitulyaka sect referred to in the Kathāvatthu commentary.

greatly increased", it also suggests the reading vaipulya.

The word vaitulika has been used to mean a Mahāyāna follower in the Abhidharmadīpa (c.450-550 A.D.). In this work, Vasubandhu, the author of the Abhidharmakośa is accused of giving up his Sarvāstivāda views and becoming a Vaitulika.

Atra Sarvāstivādavibhraṣṭir Vaituliko nirāhaḥ (h)-vayam api trīn svabhāvān kalpayiṣyāmaḥ¹

We learn nothing of the doctrines of the Vaitulyakas from the chronicles except the fact that they were considered as heretical teachings by the orthodox Mahāvihāra. It can be deduced from the reference to the Brahmins in the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya already mentioned, that the language of the Vaitulya Pitaka was Sanskrit, the same as that of the Mahāyāna sūtras. Some idea of their doctrines can be gained from the Kathāvatthuppakarana-atthakathā of Buddhaghosa. According to this source, the Vaitulyakas held the view, that the Buddha having been born in Tusita heaven lives there and it is only a created form (nimmitarūpamattakam), that comes down to the human world; Ānanda, who learnt from it, preached

1. Abhidharmadīpa, ed.P.S.Jaini, Patna, 1959, p.282.

the dhamma; Buddha himself never preached.

"Tattha bhagavā loke jāto loke saṁvaddho lokam
abhibhuyya viharati anupalit^oto lokenā'ti suttam
ayoniso gahetvā bhagavā Tusitabhavane nibbatto
tatt^h'eva vasati manussalokam āgacchati nimmitarū-
pamattakam pan'ettha dassetīti yesam laddhi sey-
yathāpi etarahi Vetulyakānam yeva..."¹

Doctrines similar to these are found in Mahāyāna
sūtras, such as the Saddharmapundarīka. In the Saddharma-
pundarīka, Śākyamuni holds his supernatural audience not
in Tuṣita, but on the Vulture peak. Regarding the fact
that Ānanda preached the dhamma, Louis de la Vallée
Poussin says,

"The Kaşgar manuscript (of the Saddharmapun-
darīka) is marvellously to the point. Bhagavat
entrusts Ānanda, in so many words, with the glo-
rious task of preaching the Lotus."²

Another view of the Vetulyakas according to the
Kathāvatthu commentary was that the Buddha makes only a pretext
of accepting offerings in order to be in conformity with
the world (lokānuvattanattham) but in actual fact, does

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1. Kathāvatthu-ppakarana-atthakathā, ed. I. P. Minayeff,
PTSJ., 1889, p.171.
 2. JRAS., 1907, pp.431f.

not take anything (na Bhāgavā kiñci paribhuñjati).

Therefore, what is given to him brings no fruit and hence no help (nirupakāraṭṭā). They also believed that the saṅgha meant only the 'fruit of the path' in the ultimate sense of the term (paramatthato maggaphalam eva saṅgho). Hence, it should not be said that the saṅgha accepts gifts, (na vattaḅbam saṅgho dakkhiṇaṃ paṭigaṇhāti) and purifies gifts (na vattaḅbam saṅgho dakkhiṇaṃ visodheti). What is given to the saṅgha brings no benefit (na vattaḅbam saṅghassa dinnam mahappaḥalam). The Kathāvatthu commentary states that these views were held by the Vetulyakas who were also known as Mahāsuññatāvādins.¹ Śūnyavāda was the main philosophical tenet of the Mādhyamika school of Mahāyāna whose primary advocate was Nāgārjuna.

The Vetulyakas also approved of the rite of sex-relations of any human pair by mutual consent (ekādhippāyo methuno dhammo paṭivesitabbo). The word ekādhippāyo is commented upon as common purpose, and resolution

1. Kathāvatthu, pp.167f. A. Bareau, Le sectes bouddhiques du petit véhicule, Saigon, 1955, p.254 reads it as Mahāpuñṇavāda, the Doctrine of Great Merit. He describes the Vetulyakas as 'eclectic' Hīnayānists who represented the views of Andhakas, Mahīśāsakas and Dharmaguptakas.

made at a shrine after worshipping there with a woman, to be reborn together.¹ Louis de la Vallée Poussin points out that all these details given in the Kathāvatthu commentary have some Mahāyāna tinge and also could be traced in the list of heretical views of Vasumitrā. He adds that the fact that the Vetulyakas are not named among the eighteen schools of early Buddhism also supports the evidence.

The Vetulyakas were referred to as Vitaṇḍavādins in the Dīpavaṃsa.² The term vitanda denotes in Indian logic a person who refutes the views of opponents without substituting his own views. It is sometimes rendered in English by 'caviling'. Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva and other teachers of the Śūnyavāda philosophy were alleged to be Vitaṇḍavādins by their opponents. Nāgārjuna and his followers held the view that nothing in the world has absolute reality, everything being relative. Walpola Rahula has pointed out that the Pali commentaries such as Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā and Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā made

1. Kathāvatthu... p.197.

2. Dv., 32.41-42.

reference to the Vitaṇḍavādins, evidently those unorthodox Buddhists.¹

On the basis of the evidence discussed above, it is reasonable to conclude that the Vetulyavādins who disturbed the hegemony of the orthodox Buddhist order were Mahāyānists.

Religious developments in India from time to time, made a tremendous impact on the Buddhist church in Ceylon. The introduction of Vaitulyavāda into the island took place not long after the period when Nāgārjuna's philosophy gained predominance in India. This was the time when the Mahāyāna teachings were first systematized. Probably, Vaitulyavāda was known in Ceylon before the incident that took place during Vohārika Tissa's reign, but the support they had had until this time was not strong enough to challenge the Mahāvihāra monks.²

It is significant that Nāgārjuna's principal disciple as well as an important contributor to Mahāyāna in his own right is considered to be of Ceylonese origin.

1. History of Buddhism in Ceylon, Colombo, 1956, p.89

2. S.Paranavitana, CJSG, II, p.36

As there has been some controversy on the actual origin of Āryadeva, we shall examine here the available evidence connected with the identity of Āryadeva. Āryadeva's Ceylonese origin has undoubtedly great relevance to the growth of Mahāyāna itself and its connection with Ceylon.

The date of Āryadeva has been a point of controversy.¹ The most plausible date, however, is around the third century² A.D. The introductory part of the commentary on Āryadeva's Catuhśataka by Candrakīrti (sixth-seventh c.A.D.) gives the most trustworthy account of the life of Āryadeva.³ According to this, Āryadeva was born in the island of Siṃhala (Siṃhaladvīpa) and was a king's son. He renounced the world, came to South India and became a disciple of Nāgārjuna.⁴ The Mañjuśrīmūlatantra refers to Āryadeva as

1. See I-tsing, A record of the Buddhist religion tr. J. Takakusu, Oxford, 1896, Introduction, p.lix; E.Conze, Buddhism: its essence and development, Oxford, 1953, Chronological table; R.K. Mookerji, Ancient Indian education, Brahmanical and Buddhist, London, 1947, pp.557,576; S.C. Vidyabhusana, History of Indian Logic, Calcutta, 1921, p.261.
2. HIL., Vol.II, p.350.
3. T.R.V.Murti, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, London, 1955, p.92.
4. V.Bhattacharya, IHQ., 1933, p.978.

Siṃhaladvīpavāsin¹. Tāranātha² and Bu-ston³ referred to the birth place of Āryadeva as the island of Siṃhala. The information given in the above works is supported by the statement of Hsüan-tsang which says that Bodhisattva Deva came from the island of Siṃhala (chi-sse-tseu)⁴.

However, some scholars have suggested that Siṃhala was a country in South India⁵. This misunderstanding may have been due to the proximity of Ceylon to South India and the close contact between Ceylon and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa in South India, the centre of activity of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva.⁶

Ten books⁷ are attributed to Āryadeva of which

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1. N.Dutt, IHQ., 1934, pp.137 ff.
 2. Tāranātha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien, German tr. A. Schiefner, St.Petersburg, 1869, pp.38ff.
 3. The history of Buddhism in India and Tibet by Bu-ston, tr. E.Obermiller, Heidelberg, 1931, p.130.
 4. BRW, I, p.188, & p.189, n.76.
 5. Cf. Thomas Watters, On Yuan Chwang's travels in India, 629-645 A.D. London, 1904, I, p.321.
 6. See EB., Vol.II, p.110
 7. More books are attributed due to a confusion with a second Āryadeva who lived in the seventh or eighth century. See EB., p.112.

Catuhśataka is the masterpiece. The original work is lost but it is preserved intact in Tibetan from which it has been reconstructed into Sanskrit.¹ The first half is devoted to the exposition of the Mādhyamika philosophy. The second half contains polemics not only against rival schools of Buddhist thought but also against Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika conceptions. This can be assessed as one of the most significant works on the Mādhyamika thought after Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika-kārikā. Āryadeva's Śataśāstra is a summary of or an introduction to his Catuhśataka while the Aksaraśataka is a synopsis of the Mādhyamika doctrine. The Śataśāstravaipulya, Mahāpuṣaśāstra and Hastavālaprakaraṇa are among the rest.²

The fact that Āryadeva was of Ceylonese origin gains in importance when we bear in mind that the Mahāvamsa mentions a thera by the name of Deva who preached the doctrine to king Vohārika Tissa.³

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1. Chapters VIII-XVI edited by Vidhusekhar Bhattacharya, Visvabharati, 1931; Chap.VII edited by the same author in the Proceedings of the IVth Oriental Conference, Allahabad, 1926, pp.831ff.
 2. For details see EB., pp.113, 114.
 3. Kappukagāmaṁvāsissa Devattherassa santike
Dhamma sutvā patikammaṁ pañcāvāse akārayi

Mv., 36.29.

The Dīpavaṃsa also says that king Tissaka (i.e. Vohārika Tissa) heard the Gilānasutta from thera Deva¹. Although these sources do not indicate Deva to be a Mahāyāna monk, it is unlikely that two prominent monks bearing the same name of Deva lived during the same time. The fact that Āryadeva is known by the name Deva (the name referred to in Ceylon) in the Chinese, Tibetan and Sanskrit literature further adds to the plausibility of Deva being the same as Āryadeva. It is therefore, possible to speculate that Deva of the Ceylon chronicles is the same as Āryadeva and the references to him relate to a time before he left Ceylon, where conditions were perhaps not congenial for Mahāyāna teachers as in the neighbouring country.

To return to the discussion on Vaitulyavāda in Ceylon, we may also note that the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya has specifically stated the name of the particular sect who embraced the Vaitulya Pitaka as monks of the Abhayagiri monastery who were known as the Dhammaruci. It is not irrelevant here to trace the origin of the Abhayagiri monastery and the formation of the Dhammaruci

1. Dv., 22.41,50.

Nikāya which played an important role in promoting the spread of the Mahāyāna in Ceylon. Vaṭṭagāmaṇī Abhaya (89-77 B.C.) built a monastery called Abhayagiri and offered it to thera Mahātissa as a mark of gratitude for helping the king recover his lost sovereignty. The Mahāvihāra monks charged the thera Mahātissa with the offence of frequenting the families of laymen (kulasamsattha) and imposed on him the punishment of expulsion from the Order (pabbājanīya-kamma). When a pupil of Mahātissa, known as Bahala-massu Tissa, protested against the punishment given to his teacher, the punishment of expulsion was imposed upon him too. Bahala-massu Tissa left the Mahāvihāra with a large following of monks and went into residence at the Abhayagiri monastery. It was after this incident that a group of disciples of a teacher called Dhammaruci belonging to the Vajjiputta sect of the Pallarārāma monastery in India arrived in Ceylon and was received at the Abhayagiri monastery¹. It is quite understandable that the Abhayagiri monks entertained the Dhammarucis in order to strengthen their position against the Mahāvihāra.

1. Mv., 33.91-97; Ns., tr. pp.11-12.

From that time onwards, those belonging to the Abhayagiri monastery were known as the Dhammaruci Nikāya. Thus, for the first time, a second nikāya of the Buddhist saṅgha, "a body of men separated from the Theriya Nikāya (Mahāvihāra monks) was established in Bhagiri Vehera in the fifteenth year of the reign of Vaḷagam Abhā."¹ It should be remembered here, that the Abhayagiri monks took up residence at the Abhayagiri monastery and lived as a separate body purely due to personal and disciplinary reasons and that they were not identified as a separate sect until the coming of the Dhammarucis.

Neither the Mahāvamsa, nor the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya gives any information about the teachings of the Dhammaruci Nikāya or their original sect, Vajjiputta Nikāya of India. The Nikāyasaṅgrahaya only mentions that the Vajjiputta was one of the 18 sects into which Buddhism was split up before it was introduced into Ceylon. From the words in the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya, "Ācārya of Vajjiputta Nikāya ... accepting their doctrines joined them and settled down under the title of Dhammaruci Ācārya", it can be inferred that the title 'Dhammaruci' was bestowed

1. Ibid., p.12

on the Ācārya by the residents of the Abhayagiri monastery and the former was elected as the chief of the sect. 'Dhammaruci' which means 'those who take pleasure in the dhamma' or 'those who cause the dhamma to shine' could well be a title chosen by the Abhayagiri monks with a view to outshine the opposing camp.

Buddhaghosa has given an account of some of the views held by the Vajjiputtakas in his Kathāvatthu commentary.¹ One of the views was that there was an individual personal entity (puggalavāda), which is a theory quite opposite to the principles of anattā of the Theravada. But it cannot be certain whether the followers of the Dhammaruci Nikāya at the Abhayagiri monastery held the Vajjiputtaka views as described by Buddhaghosa.

However, one point is clear; the Abhayagiri monks had a liberal and a progressive spirit and welcomed new ideas from abroad. It was two centuries after welcoming the Dhammarucis, that the Vetulyavāda was mentioned to have been received at the Abhayagiri monastery.

Though the Vetulyakas were suppressed as a religious body by the king at the time, Vohārika Tissa, it was only

1. Kathāvatthu... pp.7f.

a temporary measure. They officially came up again, in the reign of Goṭhābhaya (249-262 A.D.). We learn from the chronicles¹ that monks of the Abhayagiri monastery belonging to the Dhammaruci sect again put forward the Vaitulyavāda as the true doctrine of the Buddha. One of the residents of the Abhayagiri monastery itself, a thera called Ussiliyā Tissa, rose against the Vaitulyavāda, remembering the actions taken against those who followed Vaitulyavāda on the earlier occasion, and left the Abhayagiri. He took three hundred monks and settled down at the Dakkhinārāma. This incident gave rise to another nikāya in the Buddhist saṅgha, namely the Sāgaliya Nikāya whose founder, a thera named Sāgala, was among the monks who broke away from the Abhayagiri.

As on the earlier occasion, the king held an inquiry and finding that Vaitulyavāda was not the true doctrine, suppressed the Vaitulyakas and burnt their books at the instigation of the Mahāvihāra monks. He branded sixty monks with marks on their bodies and banished them out of the country,² which gave rise to

1. Ns., p.11

2. Mv., 36.111-112; Ns., p.13

a series of events that seriously affected the Buddhist church. The exiled monks who reached Kāvīrapaṭṭana in the Coḷa country came in contact with a monk called Saṅghamitra, who later became the champion of Mahāyāna in Ceylon. According to the Mahāvamsa, he was "versed in the teachings concerning the exorcism of spirits and so forth" (bhūtavijjādikovidō). This is the period, during which the Yogācāra school of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu was gaining ground in India and mystic and magical practices became more wide spread when Yoga exercises brought great influence to bear on Buddhism.¹ Saṅghamitra who came over to Ceylon, with the determination of avenging the action of Mahāvihāra monks and spreading Mahāyāna in the country took residence at the Abhayagiri monastery. He won over the favour of the king and was soon entrusted with the task of educating the king's two sons. He found that the elder son could not be persuaded to support him but the younger one was quite amenable. When the elder son Jetṭha Tissa became king, Saṅghamitra left for India in fear but returned as soon as the younger prince Mahāsena (274-301 A.D.) succeeded his elder brother

1. HIL., Vol.II pp.352 ff.

to the throne. Even the consecration was conducted by Saṅghamitra.¹ Evidently his days of triumph had come and he set about his campaign to propagate the Mahāyāna. He made a vain attempt to persuade the Mahāvihāra monks to accept Vaitulyavāda. Nothing could change their faith, not even a royal order forbidding the people to offer alms to the Mahāvihāra monks on pain of a fine of 100 kahāpanas. They stood steadfast by their faith, at the cost of their lives and left Anurādhapura for Rohaṇa and Malaya. Saṅghamitra had the seven-storeyed Lohapāsāda and many other buildings of the Mahāvihāra plundered and demolished. In these activities, he was assisted by the minister called Soṇa. The Nikāyasāṅgrahaya says the Mahāvihāra site was ploughed and sown with beans.² The Cetiyaḡiri monastery on the Ambatthala hill at Mihintale, one of the oldest seats of Buddhism, was occupied by the Dhammarucikas.³ The Mahāvihāra was deserted for nine years. For the first time in the history of the saṅgha in the island, the authority of the Mahāvihāra, the citadel of orthodox Buddhism, was

1. Mv., 37.3.

2. Ns., pp.12f

3. At the time Fa-hsien visited Ceylon, Cetiyaḡiri is said to have contained two thousand monks. BRWW., p.48

entirely shattered. People were agitated at the disaster brought upon the Mahāvihāra by the king and before long, public opinion rose against him. Minister Meghavaṇṇa Abhaya raised an army and declared war on him. The king and the minister met and came to a reconciliation: the former promised to restore the Mahāvihāra.¹ The wicked actions of Saṅghamitra were also avenged. One of the king's wives got Saṅghamitra assassinated by a carpenter and the Vaitulya texts burnt. The people killed the minister Soṇa and the dead body was thrown into a heap of refuse.² Thus Mahāsena's reign witnessed the darkest period of the long established traditional seat of the Buddhist church, the Mahāvihāra. As Paranavitana points out, the history of these events have come down to us in the writings of one of the parties to the dispute; hence it can hardly be taken as impartial.³ The Mahāvamsa always uses most glowing terms in describing the supporters of the Mahāvihāra and the most degrading ones for those in the opposite camp. The violent form of

1. Mv., 37, 17-25.

2. Ns., p.13

3. UHC., Vol.I, pt.I, p.253.

revenge taken on Saṅghamitra and Soṇa is not condemned by the author of the Mahāvamsa, in the spirit of the 'true doctrine' which they were struggling to maintain.

It should also be mentioned in this connection that Saṅghamitra accused the Mahāvihāra monks of not observing the Vinaya rules properly. It is possible that these accusations were not altogether groundless. A valuable piece of information is furnished in a fragmentary inscription found in the precincts of the Jetavanārama monastery.¹ Paranevitana has come to the following conclusion from the fragmentary contents: the edict was issued in the first year of the reign of Mahāsena and is related to the religious conflicts which followed his accession to the throne; the object of the edict was to regulate the ecclesiastical affairs of the state and it was addressed to the monks of the 'Five Great Residences' of the Mahāvihāra. (Here they

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1. "Proclaimed in the first year ofof the community of bhikkhūs as the doctrines of the monks who belong to are unsettled, the monks who are the followers of the Great Residences and the whole community though rebuked, sins in various ways various (having written) in books the Vayatudala (Vaya (tudala) tudalaka ca potahi)

are referred to as 'sinful monks')¹. It is particularly noteworthy that the inscription records the existence of Vayatudāla (Vaitulya) books.

We have seen how the personal jealousy of the Mahāvihāra monks led to the first schism in the Ceylon saṅgha and the establishment of a new nikāya. It was purely as a mark of gratitude that Vaṭṭagāmaṇī Abhaya offered the Abhayagiri Vihāra to the Elder Mahātissa. When the nation and the religion were being ruined by the Tamils, it was this thera who intervened and brought about a reconciliation. But for his action, the fate of Buddhism and of the Sinhalese race would have been

which creates (i.e. points out) the path of with faith one's mind and of heart in the community of bhikkhūs and in one's own self the [exposition of] meaning and the books written in the Five Great Residences and towards those who cause disturbance to one another and create confusion any in the time of any king who desires the welfare of (the others) as well as his own self his own duty which causes the increase of merit to himself the great monastery of Abhayagiri....." EZ., IV. pp.273 ff.

1. The Nikāyasāṅgrahaya mentions that Saṅghamitra tried in vain to persuade the monks of the 'Five Great Monasteries' to accept the Vaitulya teachings. See Ns., p.14

otherwise. The only charge against thera Mahātissa was that he frequented the families of laymen.

Similar punishment was enforced by the Mahāvihāra monks in another instance. When king Mahāsena built the Jetavana monastery and offered it to thera Tissa from Dakkhiṇārāma, he was charged with a very severe offence (antimavatthu) and expelled from the order against the wishes of the king. The Mahāvamsa speaks of Tissa in disparaging terms as "hypocrite, the plotter, the lawless thera Tissa, his [king's] evil friend."¹ The Nikāyasaṅgrahaya calls him by the appellation 'Kohon Tissa' (the hypocrite Tissa).² However, a different picture of the thera is given in a tenth-century inscription, "... in the great royal monastery of Denā established [of yore] for the benefit of the great elder Tis who was moderate in his desires, was content, and was known by the name of the great lord Sāguli."³

The Theravādins according to the chronicles emerged victorious towards the end of the reign of Mahāsena and

1. Mv., 37.32-33

2. Ns., p.13

3. EZ., III, pp.226-9.

the Vaitulyavāda was officially suppressed. There is no further record in the chronicles of Mahāyāna elements penetrating into the country for nearly two and a half centuries. However, there is evidence for the existence of Mahāyāna ideas and their getting absorbed into the religious practices in the country. For the first time during this period, there is reference in the Cūlavamsa to an image of the Bodhisattva recorded with apparent approval of the Mahāvihāra. This was a beautiful figure of a Bodhisattva seated on a chair with a back and having an umbrella and a maṇḍapa with jewels¹ similar in form to sculptures of Mahāyāna Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The figure was made by Jeṭṭhatissa II (328-337 A.D.) an ivory carver of renown at the request of his father Mahāsenā. This practice was later followed by Dhātusena (455-473 A.D.) who installed Bodhisattva figures and constructed a Bodhisattva temple.² Thus it is apparent that the period following Mahāsenā, which according to the chronicles witnessed the victory of the Theravāda and the suppression of Vaitulyavāda, was a time when a basic Mahāyāna practice,

1. Cv., 37. 1-39

2. Cv., 38.65-69

namely the worship of Bodhisattvas, was absorbed into the existing religious system.

Indirect evidence of the prevalence of Mahāyāna in Ceylon during the third and fourth centuries can be deduced from another source. The legend associated with the Mahāyāna work Laṅkāvatārasūtra throws some light in this connection.

Laṅkāvatārasūtra was the chief text for the doctrine of subjective idealism (viññānavāda) and was widely popular in China and Japan. It was first translated into Chinese between 420 and 430 A.D.¹ The full title of the work is Saddharmalaṅkāvatārasūtra i.e. sūtra of the entry of the good doctrine to Laṅkā. Laṅkā is mentioned in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra as a city on the peak of Mount Malaya and as the citadel of Rāvaṇa. The sūtra begins with the Buddha coming out of the palace of nāgas situated in the ocean where he had been preaching for a week. Looking at Laṅkā and remembering that previous Buddhas had preached the doctrine there, the Buddha smiled. Rāvaṇa who was inspired by the power of the Buddha, invited him to preach the doctrine of inner perception and the

1. D.T.Suzuki, Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, London, 1968, (reprint, first published in 1930). p.11.

real existence of the mind. The Buddha went in Rāvaṇa's chariot to Laṅkā where the Buddha and his attendant Bodhisattvas were adorned with jewellery by yakṣa girls and boys. He created several mountain peaks on which he himself was seen with Rāvaṇa. All the peaks then vanished suddenly; Rāvaṇa finding himself alone had a feeling of revulsion (pārāvṛtti)¹ and realized that his perception (of the mountains) was only in his mind. The Buddha then preached this sūtra.²

The reference to Laṅkā is apparently a mixture of the Laṅkā in the Rāmāyaṇa (because of the mention of Rāvaṇa) and of the Laṅkā in the Mahāvamśa (because of the reference to Malaya, the central mountain region in Ceylon).³ We should also note in this connection that Mt. Laṅkā is the name by which Samantakūṭa has been referred to in Chinese sources.⁴

Round about the time the Laṅkāvatārasūtra was composed, Laṅkā was well known to Buddhist writers as Ceylon.

1. Cf. Laṅk. 10.14

2. This convenient summary is taken from E.J.Thomas, The history of Buddhist thought, London, 1933, pp.231f.

3. Mv., 7.68

4. Chou Yi-Liang, 'Tāntrism in China', Harvard Jnl. of Asiatic Studies, 1944-45, Vol.8, p.274 & Appendix I. Also see below.

Even if Laṅkā of the Rāmāyaṇa was referring to another land, as has been sometimes alleged, we can reasonably conclude that the Laṅkā in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra was Ceylon. It is probable here, that the composer of this sūtra, knowing the Rāmāyaṇa, identified Laṅkā of this epic with the Buddhist Laṅkā they knew well.

This story of Buddha's visit to Laṅkā has curious resemblances to the alleged three visits recorded in the Mahāvamśa. The Mahāvamśa story of the three visits of the Buddha refers to Buddha preaching to nāgas in the nāga kingdom in the ocean.¹ It also refers to the Buddha's causing terror to yakṣas by storm, rain and darkness. Buddha also causes the mountain Giridīpa to come near.² It is also recorded that the Buddha left his foot-print on Samantakūṭa.³ Although these incidents we have mentioned have been extracted from a description of the three visits of the Buddha, it is apparent that there is a large degree of similarity between the Mahāvamśa story and that in the Laṅkāvatāra.

The Mahāvamśa story finds mention also in the

1. Mv., 1.48

2. Ibid., 1.30-35

3. Ibid., 1.77

Dīpavaṃsa and we may ascribe the period between the fourth and the fifth century as the date of the compilation of the story. There is no reference to this story of the three visits of the Buddha to Ceylon in the Pali canonical works. We may therefore surmise that there was a common source for both sets of legends, i.e. that contained in the chronicles and that told by the Laṅkāvatārasūtra. It is also characteristic to find an unequivocal statement by Hsüan-tsang to the effect that "On the south-east corner of the country is Mount Laṅkā. Its high crags and deep valleys are occupied by spirits that come and go; it was here that Tathāgatha formerly delivered the Ling-kia-king (Laṅkā Sūtra or Laṅkāvatāra)"¹. This would point to the fact that by the seventh century there was little doubt that the Laṅkāvatārasūtra was preached in Ceylon.

It is true, we cannot directly deduce Mahāyāna influence in Ceylon from the legend in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra. However, it can be maintained that, had Mahāyānism not had a prominent place in Ceylon between the third and fourth century it would have been most unlikely

1. BRWW., Vol.II, p.251.

for the compilers of the Laṅkāvatārasūtra to ascribe this important work as preached to the inhabitants of Laṅkā.

A remarkable event in the religious history of the island took place in the fourth century immediately after Mahāśena's reign. The Tooth Relic which later became the national palladium of the Sinhalese kings was sent by the king of Kalinga to king Mahāśena. Though Mahāśena was dead by the time it arrived in the country, it was given due homage by his son, Sirimeghavaṇṇa (301-328 A.D.). It was placed in a special building in the precincts of the royal palace and was taken to the Abhayagiri monastery annually for public exhibition.¹

The Abhayagiri was known as a centre of Mahāyānism during Mahāśena's reign and the prince and princess who brought the Tooth Relic were perhaps themselves Mahāyānists and thus came in contact with the Abhayagiri monks.² The fact that the Mahāvihāra authorities showed less interest than might have been expected towards the most respected relic of the Buddha adds support to this conjecture.³

1. Dāṭhavaṃsa 301,302; Cv., 37. 92-97

2. W.Rahula, op.cit., p.97.

3. The Cūlavāṃsa makes only passing references. The Nikāyaśāṅgrahaya ignores the incident entirely.

Buddhaghosa, a strong supporter of the Mahāvihāra, makes no reference to the relic in his commentaries and this is rather surprising as his visit to Ceylon took place even less than a century after this most outstanding event of the era. The only explanation for this absence of reference is that it was brought to Ceylon under the aegis of Mahāyānism and that the Abhayagiri monastery was associated with it.

The cult of the Tooth Relic acquired a very important place from the time it arrived in Ceylon. Only the possessor of the relic could claim sovereignty. In spite of the vicissitudes this relic underwent through the many centuries, it still remains the most venerated relic among the Buddhists in Ceylon. It is apparent that the annual festival of the Tooth Relic was even then the most popular religious event among the people. The Chinese pilgrim, Fa-hsien who visited Ceylon at the beginning of the fifth century gives an elaborate description of the festival and of the manner in which the king, the monks and the laity showed reverence¹ to the

1. BRWW., pp.LXXV.f; J.Legge, The travels of Fa-hien, Fa-hien's record of Buddhistic kingdoms, Delhi, 1971, pp.105f.

Tooth Relic when it was brought in procession to the Abhayagiri monastery once a year for public exhibition.

Abhayagiri was also the monastery where Fa-hsien chose to dwell. During the two years Fa-hsien spent in Ceylon, he is said to have obtained texts such as the Vinayapitaka of the Mahīśāsaka school¹, the Dirghāgama, the Samyuktāgama² and also the Samyuktasañcayapitaka³

There is also an account in Fa-hsien's record which throws some light on the relative state of strength of the monasteries. The Abhayagiri monastery accommodated 5000 monks while the Mahāvihāra had 3000. The stūpa in the Abhayagiri was 470 feet in height and the shrine by the side of the stūpa had a jasper image of the Buddha, 22ft. in height. Near the shrine there was a Bodhi tree which a former king obtained from Mid-India. Under the Bodhi tree, was an image of the Buddha in a sitting posture to which both the monks and the laymen paid reverence.⁴

1. J.Legge, op.cit., p.111; also BRWN., pp.LXXIIIff.

The Mahīśāsakavinaya is translated into Chinese by Buddhajīva and a Chinese śramaṇa about 425 A.D., see B. Nanjio's Catalogue, No.1122.

2. Ibid., 545 & 504.

3. Ibid., see fourth division of the canon.

4. BRWN., pp. LXXII f.

One may be inclined to believe that Fa-hsien gave a partial picture of the time. But he has not spoken of the Abhayagiri in any glowing terms apart from the fact that he has listed the religious monuments which belonged to the Abhayagiri and given a graphic description of the Tooth Relic festival associated with the Abhayagiri. He has treated the Mahāvihāra in just the same manner or even a little better. He speaks of a Mahāvihāra monk, a very eminent śramaṇa whose life was so pure that the men of the country generally gave him credit for being an arhat. The king performed an elaborate funeral for him in accordance with the rules given in the sacred books of which Fa-hsien gives an eye-witness report. He added that the king being 'earnest in the Law of the Buddha' built a new vihāra for the Mahāvihāra monks and issued an edict about the grant.¹ From this description, it can be inferred that the Mahāvihāra monks were of a saintly character and were more concerned with spiritual upliftment than perhaps enjoying popularity among the laity. It also can be inferred that the Abhayagiri monks moved more with the masses, probably because the cult of the

1. BRWN., pp.LXXVIf; also J. Legge, op.cit., p.107f.

Tooth Relic attracted popular attention to a considerable degree.

There is evidence to suggest that king Silākāla (518-531) was a follower of Mahāyāna. During his youth, he was a sāmanera at the monastery of Bodh Gayā¹ and certainly he would have been familiar with the religious trends at the time. It should be remembered here that it was the time when Mahāyāna was gaining ground in North India.² An event which was conducive to the spread of Mahāyāna in Ceylon took place during the reign of Silākāla. In his twelfth year, a Ceylonese merchant is said to have brought to Ceylon what the Cūlavamsa refers to as Dhammadhātu from Kāsi (Benares). The king received it with great reverence believing it to be the "true doctrine of the Buddha" and kept it in a house near the palace. He took it to the Jetavana-vihāra annually and held a festival.³ The Nikāyaśaṅgraha gives further information on the event; that the merchant Pūrṇa brought a book of Vaitulya doctrines and the king after placing the book at Jetavana-vihāra ordered the

1. Cv., 39.46

2. HIL., p.361

3. Cv., 41.37-40

monks to show reverence to it. The monks at Jetavana-vihāra refused to do so since they had heard about the punishments suffered by those who embraced the Vaitulya doctrines in the past. However the Abhayagiri monks persuaded the 'foolish monks' at the Jetavanavihāra to show respect.¹

The term dharmadhātu is applied to the first of the three bodies of the trikāya of the Mahāyāna, i.e. the dharmakāya. (The trikāya doctrine was known in Ceylon round the eighth century.)² The practice of enshrining scriptures which were referred to as dharmadhātu was known among the Mahāyānists. The Sinhalese Saddharmaratnākaraya records that a certain king Kassapa rebuilt the Abhayagiri stūpa to a height of 140 cubits and enshrined dharmadhātu therein.³ This is most likely to be Kassapa IV (898-914), the only king who is known to have rebuilt this stūpa. The Saddharmaratnākaraya also states that the dharmacetiya is one of the three kinds of stūpa, where scriptures are enshrined, the other two being the pāribhogikacetiya (articles of use)

1. Ns., tr. pp. 16-17

2. For a detailed discussion see below. pp.152 ff.

3. Srtnk., p.359; Pjv., p.103.

and the dhātucaitya (body relics)¹. A number of copper plaques with inscriptions of extracts from the Prajñāpāramitāsūtra and Kāśyapaparivarta written in the eighth or ninth century have been found at Iṇḍikaṭuśaya, Mihintale.² A book named Dahamdā, an object of veneration was referred to in two tenth-century inscriptions.³ Paranavithana concludes that the Dharmadhātu brought to Ceylon during Silākāla's reign was a treatise on the doctrine of trikāya.⁴

During the reign of Aggabodhi I (571-604), times seem to have changed in favour of the Mahāvihāra. A great thera named Jotipāla defeated the "adherents of the Vetulla School" in a public controversy.⁵ (This was the period when the ideas of the renowned philosophers Dinnāga and Dharmakīrti dominated the spiritual scene in India. Hsüan-tsang's records too indicate that public debates on controversies on religion were common at the time). Further, we learn from the Cūlavamsa

1. Srtmk., p.322

2. See below.

3. See below.

4. CJSG., II, p.38

5. Cv., 42.35

record that the "Ādipāda called Dāṭhāpabhuti, ashamed (at the defeat), raised his hand to strike him (the thera). At the self-same moment an ulcer appeared (on his hand)".¹

It may be surmised from the Cūlavamsa record that the Vaitulyavāda exerted such great influence in the country as to demand the need for a public controversy and that the followers of the Vaitulya doctrine had a strong backing from persons such as Dāṭhāpabhuti. This surmise is strengthened by the remark in the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya that the Vaitulya doctrines brought to Ceylon for the fourth time by merchant Pūrṇa were observed ever since by the ignorant people of the island. However, after the defeat of Vaitulyavāda by Jotipala, the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya adds that the monks of the two nikāyas (Abhayagiri and Jetavana) "dismissed pride and lived in submission" to the monks of the Mahāvihāra.²

There is no mention in the chronicles of Vaitulyavāda or any other heretical sect from the time of Aggabodhi I (571-604) up to the period of Sena I (833-853). However, a study of inscriptions and sculptures of the

1. Ibid., 42.36

2. Ns., p.15

period and foreign records of the visits of eminent Mahāyāna teachers reveal that this was a period of extensive Mahāyāna activity.

A characteristic feature of some lithic records assignable to the period between the sixth and ninth centuries is that the individuals who performed some act of charity had expressed the wish for Buddhahood. The aspiration to become a Buddha in order to save all sentient beings from samsāra is the most distinctive feature in the Mahāyāna; while in the Theravāda one strives after one's own salvation.

The earliest record of an individual expressing the wish for Buddhahood is found in the Kuccaveli¹ rock inscription of the seventh century written in a script resembling the Grantha alphabet of South India. The epigraph contains two Sanskrit verses of Upajāti and Vasantatilakā metres, the translation of which is as follows:

"By this merit, may I be able, in every succeeding rebirth, to relieve all the suffering of

1. Twenty one miles to the north of Trincomalee

the world and to bestow complete happiness [on humanity]. [May I also always] be full of forbearance and compassion.

"By this merit, may I vanquish the foes, Māra and sin; and having attained to that supreme state of Buddhahood, may I, with my hand of great compassion, deliver suffering humanity from the extensive quagmire of samsāra."¹

To the side of the inscription there is a mandala of about four feet square divided into sixteen squares within each of which a stūpa is carved in low relief, evidently the act of merit the individual performed.

Another donative inscription which occurs in a foundation stone near the ancient ruins at Nillakgama records the wish for Buddhahood. The inscription written in Sinhalese characters of the eighth or the ninth century reads:

"I am Bud of Monoragal. By the fruit of the merit of causing these ten elephants to be made, and dedicating (them) to the great Bodhi (tree may I become) a Supreme, Perfect Buddha."²

The ten elephants referred to are found sculptured

1. EZ., III, p.161.

2. ASCAR., 1954, pp.27f.

in the frieze just above the inscription.

The same theme is repeated in a record of ninth century Sinhalese characters inscribed on a thin gold scroll found at the Kaṭusāya monastery site at Mihintale. The inscription contains the Pali verse Ye dhammā hetu-ppabhavā ... followed by a passage in corrupt Sanskrit, presumably a commentary on the Pali verse, and concluded by the donor's wish that he may be able to save all sentient beings.¹

The Kapārārāma Sanskrit inscription of the tenth-century Grantha characters in the monastery north of the Kuṭṭam Pokuna at Anurādhapura belongs to the same category. The epigraph records the gift of two hundred taṅka coins by a monk named Saṅghanandin to provide drinkables to the saṅgha. The donor expresses the wish for Buddhahood in a vakrokti; he refers to himself as "that wise one, whose sole business was the quenching of the thirst of all persons."²

It is to be noted that the same theme of aspiration to Buddhahood prevailed in the epigraphs of Ceylonese

1. ASCAR., 1937, p.11; 1938, p.6

2. Ibid., 1954, pp.11,30; EZ., V, pt.i, p.163.

visitors to Bodh Gayā during this time. The first of these is a Sanskrit inscription of the sixth century A.D.

"There was a pious monk, Prakhyātakīrtti [by name], born from the house of the rulers of the Isle of Laṅkā (Ceylon) and a moon in the sky of his race. Out of devotion that Friar, longing to attain Buddhahood caused a kārā to be duly made at the Triratna for the peace of men. Whatsoever merit, therefore, I have acquired thence it will be [for the benefit of] the teacher ... may he be provided with that very fruit of bliss."¹

Another inscription of the ninth or the tenth century mentions a "Sinhalese Udayaśrī wishing to escape from the world which is submerged in an ocean of woe."²

Other epigraphic records of Ceylon belonging to this period reflect the prevalence of well established Mahāyāna concepts and practices.³ The Tiriyāya inscription of the seventh century contains invocations to Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī. The Trikāyastava inscription at Mihintale dated eighth century

1. ASIAR., 1908-9, pp.156.

2. Ibid., p.157.

3. For details see pp. 152 ff.; pp.253 f.

extols the Mahāyāna doctrine of the Trikāya. The popularity of Mahāyāna cults during this time as represented in epigraphic records is further corroborated by sculptural remains of the period.¹

One of the most important religious events of the eighth century was the growth of Tāntrism in India and Ceylon and its spread to China and later to Japan. The three monks from India and Ceylon, Śubhākarasiṅha (Chin. Shan-wu-wēi, Jap. Zemmui), Vajrabodhi (Chin. Chih-kang-chih, Jap. Kongōchi) and Amoghavajra (Chin. Chih-tsang and Pu-K'ung, Jap. Fukū) were the first patriarchs of the sect called Chên-yen or "True Word" (Jap. Shin-gon), also known as Mi-chiao (Jap. Mikkyō) or "Esoteric Teaching", equivalent to the Sanskrit Mantrayāna or Tantrayāna.² Its chief object of worship was Buddha Mahāvairocana, the Sun Buddha. The basic doctrine of this sect teaches that the entire cosmos is the body of Vairocana which is divided into Garbhadhātu (Material) and Vajradhātu

1. For details see pp.251 ff.; p.315.

2. Isshu Miura, Ruth Fuller Sasaki, Zen Dust, the history of the Koan and Koan study in Rinzai (Lin-chi) Zen, New York, 1966, pp.189ff; HB., III, pp.316ff; André Bareau, Der Indische Buddhismus, Die Religionen Indiens, Stuttgart, 1964, III, pp.173f.

(indestructible), the two together forming Dharmadhātu.

All existences, thoughts, words and actions in their essential nature are manifestations and emanations from Vairocana. The perfect communion between the devotee and the Buddha is to be attained according to this school through practices that use mantra, mudrā and yoga.

Of the three South Asian patriarchs who propagated this sect in China, the most influential seems to have been Amoghavajra. He translated a large number of works into Chinese and was immensely popular with the imperial family; he performed the abhiṣeka (initiation of a pupil) of the Emperor Hsüan-tsung and instructed the two succeeding Emperors Su-tsung, Tai-tsung and the crowned prince Tê-tsung.

According to Chinese sources, Amoghavajra was born in Siṃhala (Ceylon) in the first year of the Shên-lung period of the T'ang dynasty (705 A.D.) and became a monk in his early teens¹. He became a pupil of Vajrabodhi

1. Catalogue of Buddhist books collected at the Chên-yüan period, fasc.15(EB., fasc. Ak-An, pp.482ff.) The memoir of Amogha, the Tripitaka - bhadanta written by Chao Chi'ien states that Amogha was a native of the Western region and went to China with his uncle.

in the country of Yavadvīpa (Java) and went with him to China. Later Amoghavajra went to Ceylon with a message from the Chinese Emperor and was accorded royal reception by the king of Siṃhala, Silāmegha (Aggabodhi VI, 733-72 A.D.)¹. The king is said to have bathed Amoghavajra every day with scented water, and the members of the royal family and of the court showed him great respect and veneration.²

Amoghavajra received further training in Tāntric practices under the tutelage of Ācārya Samantabhadra, an eminent Tāntrist in Ceylon who performed for Amoghavajra the ceremony of two maṇḍalas, i.e. Vajra-dhātu and Garbhadhātu. Amoghavajra spent more than three years in Ceylon with two of his Chinese disciples, Han Kuang and Hui Kung, learning under Samantabhadra, the abhiṣecanī,³ dhāraṇī, mudrā, maṇḍala, etc. Amoghavajra

1. Yuan Chao's Sung-kao-seng-chuan; UHC., Vol.I, pt.i, pp.64.

2. W.Pachow, 'Ancient cultural relations between Ceylon and China', UCR., Vol.XI, No. 3 & 4, pp.184f.

3. This practice of anointing at the initiation of a pupil was mentioned in a tenth-century Ceylon inscription during the reign of Abhāsalamēvan (Udaya I). Harsayen vahanse vālaṇḍu anantarayen mekunvahanse

also obtained eighty sūtras on dhāraṇī teachings such as Vajraśekhharayogasūtra, twenty books of the sūtras and śāstras of both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna which comprised 1,200 fascicles.¹ According to Chao-Ch'ien, Amogha collected 100,000 ślokas of the Vajraśekhharayogasūtra and more than 500,000 ślokas of mantras, sūtras and śāstras of various schools.² According to the Taisho Tripitaka, Amoghavajra obtained more than five hundred sūtras and commentaries.³

abhiṣekhayan daru Buddhamittra ācāryyan vahanse (The revered teacher Buddhamittra was a son of the revered teacher Harṣa by anointing) EZ., I, pp.191ff. The rite performed at the initiation of a pupil was certainly a Mahāyāna practice. Cf. Advayavajrasaṅgraha, ed. Haraprasada Sastri, GOS., No.XL, Baroda, 1927.

1. Yuan-chao, op.cit., It is to be noted that Fa-hsien in the fifth century also collected Buddhist Sanskrit texts from Ceylon.
2. Memoir of Amogha ... (EB., p.483. n.3)
3. Taisho Tripitaka, 50.712a 24-714a 20 (Chou-Yi-Liang, op.cit., pp.284ff.)

When Amoghavajra went back to China in 746 A.D., an imperial edict requested him to pursue the translation into Chinese of Sanskrit works, and to confer abhiseka at the Ching-ying temple. Amogha practised as a master of abhiseka for more than forty years initiating vast numbers of pupils two thousand of whom were ordained.¹

Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra's guru, also visited Ceylon and his activities during this visit point to the patronage enjoyed by Tantrayānists. The monk Vajrabodhi was a native of Malaya in South India who studied Sūtras and Abhidharmas etc., at the University of Nālandā. He went to Ceylon, and stayed for half a year in the Abhayarāja temple where he paid homage to Buddha's Tooth Relic.² On a pilgrimage to Mt. Laṅkā (where there was the Footprint of the Buddha) he visited the country of Ruhunu, the king of which practised Hīnayāna. Vajrabodhi who was entertained by the king in the palace expounded to him the Mahāyāna doctrine and succeeded in converting the

1. Memoir of Amogha ... (EB., p.484)

2. Taisho Tripitaka, 50.711b6-712a 22 (Chou-Yi-Liang, op.cit., pp.272ff).

king to Mahāyāna¹. He visited Ceylon for the second time during the reign of a king called Chi-li-chi-lo (Śrī śilā or Śilāmegha) by whom he was honoured².

Another foreign reference to Mahāyāna in Ceylon during the eighth century albeit an indirect one is pointed out by de Casparis³. He refers to the discovery of an inscribed stone fragment on the Ratubaka plateau in central Java. The inscription records the establishment of an "Abhayagiri Vihāra of Sinhalese ascetics trained in the sayings of discipline of the Best or the Jinas."

Evidently the reference here is to an establishment of a second Abhayagiri Vihāra as de Casparis puts it "having enough in common with the original in form or spirit or both to deserve the same name." De Casparis has identified the form of Buddhism at Ratubaka as clearly Mahāyāna. This conclusion is drawn from the introductory strophes and the use of the term jinasūna

1. Ibid., T.55.875c 2

2. Ibid., T.55.876a 24. S.Lévi identifies this king with Mānavamma (JA., ninth series, 15.411-429, 1900)

3. J.G. de Casparis, 'New Evidence on cultural relations between Java and Ceylon in ancient times', Artibus Asiae 24, 1961, p.241-248.

for Padmapāṇi which represents the Mahāyāna concept of the relation between a Dhyāni Buddha and a Dhyāni Bodhisattva.

De Casparis has discussed the possible reasons for the establishment of the Abhayagiri Vihāra in Java. Among the reasons under consideration was the expulsion of a number of monks from the Ceylonese Abhayagiri Vihāra. However, de Casparis himself points out that this hypothesis is unlikely since the Ceylonese chronicles which referred to cases of expulsion during various periods are completely silent about such an instance in the eighth century. We may add the following reasons; Mahāyāna flourished in Ceylon during the period between the seventh and ninth century as is confirmed by epigraphic and sculptural evidence. Furthermore, evidence culled from Chinese sources referred to above reveals that Mahāyāna was strongly entrenched in Ceylon at that time, and that Ceylon was a source of valuable texts and Mahāyāna teachers of high standing. It is also about this time the Abhayagiri nikāya was reaching its peak of prosperity. In an exhaustive study of the Buddhist saṅgha from the ninth to the thirteenth century, R.A.L.H. Gunawardana concluded that the Abhayagiri

Vihāra enjoyed extensive patronage and controlled immense resources in the ninth and tenth centuries.¹ He has also shown by means of archeological data that the Abhayagiri Vihāra was the largest in extent in the country constituting a whole complex of buildings covering an area of more than 300 acres.² Thus the expulsion of monks from the Ceylon Abhayagiri Vihāra as a possible reason for the establishment of the Javanese Abhayagiri Vihāra can be ruled out.

De Casparis, in the light of evidence available to him shows the establishment of the Abhayagiri Vihāra in Java as another example of the process of 'Indianization' and he is more inclined to believe that the initiative came from Java rather than from Ceylon. However, it may not be impossible to assume that the initiative came very much from Ceylon; the cause for this is that Ceylon became doubtless a stronghold of the Mahāyāna creed and in these circumstances Ceylon played a significant part in the propagation of Buddhism in East and South East Asia.

Thus the above evidence given from epigraphic and literary material as well as from descriptions in

1. The history of the Buddhist sangha in Ceylon from the reign of Sena I to the invasion of Māgha. Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of London, 1965, p.507.
2. Ibid., pp.28ff.

foreign records reveal the degree to which Mahāyāna ideas had penetrated into Ceylon during the period between the seventh and ninth century. (We have already mentioned that Ceylon chronicles are significantly silent on the existence of non-orthodox beliefs during this period.) The extent of non-orthodox influence, specially that of Tantrayāna, is vividly reflected by the case of Amoghavajra. He and his Chinese pupils learnt the 'esoteric teachings' in Ceylon from Samantabhadra and obtained vast quantities of literary material on these subjects from Ceylon. Further, the very high homage paid by Ceylon royalty to him as well as to his teacher Vajrabodhi gives an indication of the high esteem in which Tāntrism was held in the highest circles in Ceylon during that time.

During the reign of Sena I (833-853) Ceylon witnessed another phase of Mahāyāna development. According to the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya, an ascetic of the Vajraparvata nikāya in India, came to Ceylon and resided at the Vīraṅkurārāma at Abhayagiri.¹ He worked his way into

1. The Vīraṅkurārāma was granted by Sena I to the bhikkhūs of the Mahāsāṅghika and the Theriya nikāya. n.contd.

the king's favour by bribing the palace cook for fifteen kalaṇḍas of gold so that he should sing praises to the king. The king rejected the true doctrines such as the Ratanasūtra and accepted the false Vājiriyavāda.¹ The Nikāyasaṅgrahaya further records that Vājiriyavāda remained ever since among the foolish as a secret doctrine practised in private.

Vājiriyavāda is the name of one of the early sects of Buddhism, but it is difficult to say whether the ascetic who introduced the Vājiriyavāda belonged to the early sect of that name, since not much is known of its doctrine.² However, 'Vājiriya' and

Katvā Vīraṅkurārāmaṃ vihāre Abhayuttare
Mahāsamghikabhikkhūnaṃ Theriyānaṃ ca dāpayi, Cv., 50.68

On the evidence of the above reference and of an inscription found within the grounds of the Abhayagiri monastery (EZ, II, pp. 1-10), Gunawardana suggested the existence of the Sarvāstivāda, Sammitiya and the Mahāsāṅghika nikāyas in Ceylon in the ninth century. See 'Buddhist nikāyas in mediaeval Ceylon', CJHS., Vol. 9, No. 1, Jan-June 1966, pp. 55-66.

1. Ns., p. 16.
2. UHC., Vol. I, pt. i, p. 383.

'Vajraparvata' appear to have been used as synonymous terms in the Nikāyaśaṅgrahaya.¹ Vajraparvata, presumably the place where the ascetic came from, has not been identified. The Avatamsaka Sūtra mentions a place called Vajraparvata situated in the sea where Bodhisattvas are said to have assembled.²

Eliot conjectured that Vājiriyavāda was connected with Vajrayāna.³ Vajrayāna, which according to B. Bhattacharyya was a direct development of the Yogācāra philosophy, based on Mahāsukhavāda which advocated worldly enjoyments such as wine, women and food. In the Vajrayāna, nirvāna consisted of three elements, i.e. śūnya, viññāna and mahāsukha. This triple combination of śūnya was termed vajra since it was believed to be indestructible, Mantras which constitute the backbone of the Vajrayāna were believed to bestow upon the devotees supernatural powers.⁴

1. Ns., p.8

2. Taisho Tripitaka, Vol.X, p.241b.

3. HB., III, p.40

4. An introduction to Buddhist esoterism, Oxford University Press, 1932, pp.27,32,35,55,57. Also see Advayavajrasaṅgraha, pp. 11, 23,24; B.Bhattacharyya, 'Glimpses of Vajrayāna', Proceedings and transactions of the third oriental conference, Madras, 1925, pp.129-141

The Vajraparvata ascetics, the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya records, composed the following works: Gūḍhavinaya, Māyājālatantra, Samājatantra, Mahāsamayatattvatantra, Tattvasaṅgrahatantra, Bhūtaḍāmaratantra, Vajrāmṛtatantra, Cakrasaṁvaratantra, Dvādaśacakratantra, Herukādbhutatatantra, Mahāmāyātantra, Padaniḥkṣepatantra, Catuspīṭhatantra¹, Parāmarḍdatantra, Marīcyudbhavatatantra, Sarvabuddhatantra, Sarvaguhyatatantra, Samuccayatatantra, Marīcīkalpa, Herambhakalpa, Trisamayakalpa, Rājakalpa, Vajragandhāra-kalpa, Marīcīguhyakalpa, Śuddhasamuccayakalpa, Māyāmarīcīkalpa.

Most of these texts have been identified in Tibetan and Chinese translations.² Māyājālatantrarājapañjikā of the Tibetan Buddhist canon³ could well be a commentary on the Māyājālatantra mentioned in the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya. The Samājatantra was in all probability the Guhyasamāja-tantra⁴, which has also been known as Śrīsamāja⁵. The initial guhya is of course used to indicate the secret nature of the teachings.⁶ Śrī-mahāsamaya-tantrarāja of

1. The text has Catuspīṭhatantra.

2. S. Parānavitana, CJSG., II, p.69; IMC., pp.17f.

3. CTBC., Nos.288 & 2514.

4. Ed. B. Bhattacharyya, GOS., Vol. LIII.

5. B. Bhattacharyya, Buddhist esoterism, p.70.

6. There is also a Tantrayāna work by the name of Guhyasiddhi written by Padmavajra of 693 A.D. See Ibid., pp.69f.

the Tibetan canon¹ is very likely the Mahāsamayatattvatantra of the Vajraparvatavāsins. The Tattvasaṅgrahatantra may mean the philosophical treatise Tattvasaṅgraha² written by Śāntarakṣita around 747 A.D. Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana refers to an incomplete text of the Bhūtadāmaratantra by Vīryaśrīdatta in Vartula script found in Tibet.³ Bhūtadāmaramaṇḍalavidhi,⁴ Bhūtadāmarasaṅksiptasādhana⁵ and Bhūtadāmarasādhana⁶ of the Tibetan canon may be other recensions of the same text. Vajrāmṛtatantra is referred to by Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana as a text written in Vartula script by Ācārya Buddhadāsa. According to Tāranātha, however, the work was by Siddhācārya Gambhīravajra.⁷ Cakrasaṃvaratantrarāja is ascribed to Indrabhūti in the Tibetan Tanjyur. Śrīcakrasaṃvaratantrarāja-adbhutaśmaśānālāṅkāra⁸ and Śrī-cakrasaṃvaraguhyacintyatantrarāja⁹ of the Tibetan canon could be commentaries

1. CTBC., No.390

2. Ed.E.Krishnamacharya, GOS., No.XXX & XXXI, Baroda,1926

3. Jnl.Bihar Orissa Res.Soc.,Vol.XXI,pt.1, March 1935,pp.21-43.

4. CTBC., Nos. 2677 & 2905

5. Ibid., Nos. 3302 & 3641

6. Ibid., Nos. 3303 & 3642

7. Tāranātha's History of Buddhism, p.275f.

8. CTBC., No.43.

9. Ibid., No.385.

on the text. The Dvādaśākāranāmanyāyastotra¹ of the Tibetan canon, may be identified with the Dvādaśacak-ratantra of the Vajraparvatavāsins. There is a Śrī-Herukādbhutanāmamaṇḍalavidhi in the Tibetan canon.² Heruka is a name of a Mahāyāna deity.³ The Mahāmāyā-sādhana is ascribed to Indrabhūti in the Tibetan Tanjur. However, we learn from Tāranātha that the Mahāmāyā was introduced into Vajrayāna by the Siddhācārya named Kukkuripa, a contemporary of Indrabhūti.⁴ The Catupīṭhaṭīkā⁵ and the Catupīṭhavikhyātatantrarāja⁶ of the Tibetan canon seem to be commentaries on the Catupīṭhatantra. Marīcyudbhavatantra of the Vajraparvatavāsins was probably the original text of the Marīcīsādhana of the Tibetan canon.⁷ The rest of the texts, except the Sarvabuddhatantra, and the Herambhakalpa, may be respectively identified with the following texts of the Tibetan canon: Śrī-guhyasarvacchinda-tantrarāja,⁸

1. Ibid., No.2135

2. Ibid., No.1261

3. Sādhana-mālā, 146.4

4. B. Bhattacharyya, Buddhist esoterism, p.69.

5. CTBC., No.1608

6. Ibid., No.430.

7. Ibid., Nos.3226,3227,3229,3230,3232,3233,3535,3662.

8. Ibid., No.384

Samuccayakramapañjikātripada¹, Marīcīdevīsādhana and Marīcīpicupāsādhana², Trisamayārājasādhana and Trisamayasaṃmayasādhana³, Rājadeśa⁴, Vajragandhārīsādhana⁵, Marīcīmaṇḍalavidhimarīcījātadvādaśasahasrād uddhṛtakalpa-hṛdayasaptaśata⁶, Māyāmarīcījātatantrād uddhṛtakalparāja⁷.

In the light of the above evidence it can be safely concluded that the Vājiriyavāda which was introduced during the time of Sena I was Vajrayāna.⁸

Around the same time, the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya says that teachings such as the Ratnakūṭa were introduced to Ceylon.⁹ It should be noted that the second of the seven sections of the Sūtrapitaka of the Chinese canon which consists of 49 sūtras is known as Ratnakūṭa or Pao-chi. The Tibetan version of the Ratnakūṭa is called dKon-brtsegs and it agrees closely with its Chinese counterpart.¹⁰ In this

1. Ibid., No.1836. Samuccaya is the name of a Mahāyāna deity.

2. Ibid., Nos.3660 & 3534 3. Ibid., 3144 & 3147

4. Ibid., Nos., 214 & 215. 5. Ibid., 3260, 3385, 3594, 3595.

6. Ibid., No. 566. 7. Ibid., No.565.

8. The prevalence of Tantrayāna is further attested by a reference in the Sammohatantra where Siṃhala is mentioned among the countries practising Kādi and Hādi modes of Tantra. See P.C.Bagehi, 'On foreign elements in the Tantra', IHQ., Vol.VII, pp.1-16. Siṃhala also figures in a Tibetan legend explaining the origin of Vajrayāna See J.Woodroffe, Śakti and Śakta, Madras, 1959, pp.631ff.

9. Ns., p.16

10. HB., III, pp.282, 283, 374.

connection, it is important to note that Kāśyapa Parivarta was also known by the name of Ratnakūṭa¹. As will be shown below copper plaques discovered at Iṇḍikaṭusāya at Cetiyaḡiri which was a monastery under the control of the Abhayagiri nikāya contained quotations from the Kāśyapa Parivarta. Thus the statement in the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya regarding the introduction of the Ratnakūṭa to Ceylon has found confirmation in epigraphic sources.

Another heretical sect that came to Ceylon around the same time as Vājiriyavāda was Nīlapaṭadarśana whose adherents, as the name indicates wore blue robes². The Nikāyasaṅgrahaya records the origin of the sect: a monk of the Sammitīya nikāya in India returning from a harlot in the morning was caught in his blue robe. To avoid embarrassment, the monk praised the blue robe and established a doctrine in which women, wine and love were adored as the triple gem. The Nikāyasaṅgrahaya quotes the following verse from a text called Nīlapaṭadarśana.

1. Edgerton, op.cit., Vol.II, p.374.

2. Ns., p.17, The word Nīlāsādhana according to Avlon was a type of Tāntric practices. Arthur Avlon, Principles of Tantra, Madras, 1952, second edition, p.14, n.1.

Veśyāratnam surāratnam ratnam devo manobhavaḥ
Etad ratnatrayam vande anyat kācamanitrāyam.

The Nikāyasaṅgrahaya adds that Nīlapaṭadarśana which was followed openly unlike Vājiriyavāda also remained in Ceylon.

A number of copper plaques, ninety one in all found at the Iṇḍikaṭusāya at Mihintale written in the eighth or ninth-century Sinhalese script contain certain excerpts from the Mahāyāna works, Prajñāpāramitāsūtra and the Kāśyapaparivarta.¹ Parānavitana compared the text of the copper plaques with the Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā and concluded that the inscriptions were taken from a variant reading of the Mahāyāna text. The sixteen inscriptions containing extracts from the Kāśyapaparivarta agree with the text edited by A. von Staël Holstein from a manuscript found near Khotan.

The inscriptions refer to the following Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: Ratnākara, Aśokaśrī, Sārthavāha, Naradatta, Śubhagupta, Indradatta, Suvikrāntavikrāmin, and Nityodyukta. Ratnākara appears as the name of a Buddha in

1. EZ., III, pp.199-212 & IV, pp.238-242.

the Saddharmapundarikasūtra¹. Aśokaśrī is a name of a Buddha occurring in the Śikṣāsamuccaya² and the Śatasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā³. Sārthavāha is a Bodhisattva referred to in the Śikṣāsamuccaya⁴ and Naradatta, a Bodhisattva mentioned in the Śatasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā⁵. There is no Bodhisattva or Buddha known by the name of Śubhagupta. The Mahāvyutpatti refers to a Bodhisattva called Śubhagarbha⁶. Indradatta, Suvikrāntavikrāmin and Nityodyukta are names of Bodhisattvas occurring in the Saddharmapundarikā⁷. Suvikrāntavikrāmin figures also in the Śatasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā⁸ while Nityodyukta again appears in the Lalitavistara⁹ and the Mahāvyutpatti¹⁰.

We may point out here that the Prajñāpāramitāsūtra

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1. Tr. M.E. Burnouf, Le lotus de la bonne loi, Paris, 1925, I, 102.
 2. Śikṣā, 169.12
 3. Śsp., 32.1
 4. Śikṣā., 145.16
 5. Śsp., 6.8
 6. Mahāvyutpatti, ed. Sakaki, Kyoto, 1916, 667.
 7. Burnouf, Le lotus ... II, 2; II.12; II.2.
 8. Śsp., 6.17
 9. Lalitavistara, ed. Lefmann, Halle, 1902, 2.14.
 10. Mahāvyutpatti, 696.

places the merit of enshrining the written words of the Prajñāpāramitāsūtra even higher than the venerating of the bodily relics of the Buddha.

In a conversation between the Buddha and the Śakra, Buddha asks:

"If, Kauśika, on the one hand you were given this Jambudvīpa filled up to the top with relics of the Tathāgatas; and if, on the other hand, you could share in a written copy of this perfection of wisdom; and if now you had to choose between either of the two which one would you take?" Śakra replies: "Just this perfection of wisdom!" [i.e. the text of the Prajñāpāramitā]¹.

These copper plaques testify to the fact that the Prajñāpāramitāsūtra and the Kāśyapaparivarta were held in high esteem by the Ceylon Buddhists who initiated religious activities in Mihintale around the eighth and ninth centuries.

The thirteen copper plaques found within the precincts of the Vijayārāma monastery² with inscriptions containing

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1. Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā, tr. E. Conze, Bibliotheca Indica, 284, Calcutta, 1958, p. 35.
 2. Situated about two and a half miles north of Anurādhapura. On the evidence that two of the Pabbatavihāras

invocations to Mahāyāna Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have also been written in Sinhalese characters of about the ninth century¹. The language is ungrammatical Sanskrit and the invocations are distinguished by the repetition of mystic syllables such as om huru huru, kili kili, svāhā. The first plaque which is distinct from the rest contains the Buddhist formula of the Causal Law, Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā ... inscribed in Pali, exclusively the language of the scriptures of the Theravāda². However

(Vijayārāma and Pubbārāma at Puliyāṅkulama) had Mahāyāna affiliations, Prematilleke and Silva argued that the monastic type of the Pabbatavihāras had distinct Mahāyāna architectural features. See 'A Buddhist monastery type of ancient Ceylon showing Mahāyānist influence,' Artibus Asiae, Vol.XXX, pp.61 ff. This theory has been refuted by Senake Bandaranayake. See Sinhalese Monastic Architecture: The vihāras of Anurādhapura, Leiden, 1974, pp.58,70-73.

1. ASC Sixth Progress Report, July to Sept. 1891, pp.12-15 Pl.XX & XXI.
2. The Sanskrit version of the stanza has been inscribed on the padmāsana of a Buddha image in the shrine at Seruvila and of a Buddha image discovered in Mahiyāṅgana stūpa (now in the Colombo Museum). Both these images are classed as belonging to Mahāyāna. See MMC., p.29. A Sanskrit version is also found in the

the formula itself is more commonly used in the Mahāyāna than in the Theravāda, the best known instance being the concluding stanza of the Prajñāpāramitāsūtra¹. The formula is also especially favoured by the Mahāyānists due to its association with śūnyatā. Plaques no. 2 and 3 are addressed to the Buddha Śikhin, one of the seven mortal Buddhas of the Mahāyāna. No.4 is an invocation to 'Gagana Buddha Tathāgatha'. There is, a Buddha by the name of Gaganacitta². Gaganagañja is a name of a Bodhisattva who, according to the Sādhanaṃālā accompanies

gold sheet discovered in Kaṭusāya (ASCAR., 1937, p.11; 1938, p.6) and in the Rājagirilenakanda inscription (CJSG., II, p.47). A number of inscriptions containing the Sanskrit stanza has been found in other parts of the Buddhist world, especially in Northern India and in Burma. See A. Cunningham, Report for 1871-72, III, Pl. IXVI, 3; A. Foucher, The beginnings of Buddhist art, London, 1918, p.II; G.H. Luce, Old Burma-Early Pagan, New York, 1969, Vol. I, p.18.

1. Suvikrāntavikrāmiparipṛcchā - Prajñāpāramitāsūtra,
ed. R.Hikata, Fukuoka,
Japan, 1958.
2. Lalitavistara, 295.10, Mahāvvyutpatti, 1336.

Lokanātha¹. Gaganagañja is also one of the 108 forms of Avalokiteśvara². In plaque No.6 Ākāśagarbha is invoked, and No.7 could be a continuation of No.6. Ākāśagarbha is also known by the name of Gaganagarbha. He is described as "guardian of the treasury of all wisdom and achievement, whose powers extend to the five directions of space."³ Ākāśagarbha is also one of the forms of Avalokiteśvara⁴. The name of Ākāśagarbha occurs in texts such as the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa⁵, Mahāvvyutpatti⁶ and Śikṣāsamuccaya⁷. The plaques Nos. 8 and 9 contain invocations to Vairocanagarbha. Bodhisattva Vairocanagarbha is found mention in the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa⁸ and the Gaṇḍavyūha⁹. The next two plaques have no special significance from a Mahāyāna point of view. The last two,

1. IBI., p.38.

2. Ibid., p.183.

3. W.E. Soothill & L.Hodous, A dictionary of Chinese Buddhist terms, Taipei, 1970, p.390.

4. IBI., p.183.

5. Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa, ed. Ganapati Sastri, Trivandrum, 1920-25, 312.4, 405.24

6. Mahāvvyutpatti, 647.

7. Śikṣā., 64.14ff.

8. Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa, 63.5

9. Gaṇḍavyūha, ed. Suzuki and Idzumi, Kyoto, 1934-36 second edition, 1949, 2.25, 80.26.

Nos. 12 and 13, contain an invocation to Tārā¹.

It is apparent that invocations to Buddhas and Bodhisattva inscribed on metal plates served the same purpose as enshrining of inscribed excerpts from scriptures and of body relics.

Eight granite tablets in which dhāraṇīs were written in the Nāgari script of about ninth century were found within the courtyard of the dāgāba at the Abhayagiri-vihāra².

Some dhāraṇīs were known in China as early as the third century A.D. These form a part of the Dhāraṇīpitaka which was made popular through the Yogācāra school of Asaṅga³. As we have observed, it was Amoghavajra who is said to be a Ceylonese who popularized in the eighth century the Yogācāra school in China, which in due course gave rise to the establishment of the Shin-gon sect in Japan. It is also to be noted that Amoghavajra received instructions on the study of dhāraṇīs, mantras etc., in Ceylon and that he took along with him to China a large number of Sanskrit texts of dhāraṇīs and mantras.

1. For a detailed discussion see pp. 274 ff.

2. ASCAR., 1940-45, p.41

3. W.E. Soothill & L.Hodous, op.cit., p.186.

Among other texts, the Saddharmapundarikasūtra¹ contains a chapter devoted to dhāraṇīs, an example of which appears below.

"Jvale mahājvale ukke tukke mukke aḍe aḍāvati
nṛtye nṛtyāvati iṭṭini viṭṭini ciṭṭim ciṭṭini nṛtyaṃ
nṛtyāvati svāhā..."

The Ginipirita, one of the parittas chanted for protection in Ceylon, sounds as if it were a Pali version of a dhāraṇī taken from the Tantrayāna.

"... Jālo mahājālo jālaṃ mahājālaṃ jālite
mahājālite jālitam mahājālitam mukhe mukhe sampatte
mukham mukhaṃ sampattaṃ vutti vutti dhāraṇī
dhāraṇīti bhavatu sabbamaṅgalaṃ rakkhantu devatā..."²

It is probable that some of the parittas used in Ceylon, such as the Ginipirita, Jayapirita, Jinapañjaraya were composed under the influence of Tantrayāna. Yantra and mantra used in occult practices even today in Ceylon which have a vocabulary similar to that of the dhāraṇīs also seem to have been fashioned after Tāntric dhāraṇīs. Below we quote the first of the eight dhāraṇī inscriptions found at the Abhayagirivihāra as a representative example.³

1. Sdmp., Chapt.21

2. Pāli-Sinhala-Pirit-Pota, ed.K. Paññāsāra

3. The text of the eight dhāraṇī inscriptions is published in MMC., pp.101ff.

"Hūṃ svāhā // Samayādhiṣṭhite
 Svāhā // Sarvva Tathāgata hr̥da-
 -Ya dhātu mudre svāhā // Supratiṣṭhi-
 -Ta stūpa sarvva Tathāgatādhiṣṭhite
 Huru huru hūṃ hūṃ svāhā // Oṃ sarvva."

The eight dhāraṇī inscriptions were no doubt composed by the Vajrayānists, as is evidenced by the use of words such as Tathāgatahr̥daya varjini, oṃ vajra guhya, oṃ vajra dīpa, oṃ vajra gandha, hūṃ vajrabodhi. Words such as stūpa, Tathāgatadhātu, dhāraṇī, etc., show that they were addressed to the stūpa where the body relics of the Buddha were deposited.

A number of clay votive tablets with ninth-century Nāgari inscriptions have been found in different localities like Monaragala in Uva Province, at Dumbara in the Central Province, and at Tangalla in the Southern province.¹ Some of them contain mystic syllables and in a number of them occurs the Buddhist creed, Ye dharmā hetuprabhavā... According to Foucher, clay tablets of this type, found in many parts of the Buddhist world were clay balls which were stamped with a seal and these were undoubtedly mementos of holy places.²

1. CJSG., II, pp.47f.

2. A. Foucher, The beginning of Buddhist art, London, 1918, p.11. See also H.Sastri, 'Nalanda and its

One interesting example contains a representation of a Buddha seated in the vajrāsana attitude within a towered shrine and surrounded by twenty small stūpas. Below the Buddha's throne is inscribed Ye dharmā hetu-prabhavā... in Nāgari script and on the back of the tablet is an inscription of mystic syllables written in the ninth - century Sinhalese characters. The Buddha is in North-Indian style and it is possible that this tablet was a souvenir of a holy site in Magadha, most probably Bodh Gayā.

Paranavitana thinks that these votive tablets were introduced to Ceylon by pilgrims to Bodh Gaya and other religious centres in India but that they were later manufactured locally from seals imported from India.¹

A large number of Mahāyāna sculptures of Buddhas² and Bodhisattvas³ belonging to the ninth and tenth centuries has been found in Ceylon. As evidence for the

epigraphic material', MAI., 66, New Delhi, 1942, pl. Ie; A Cunningham, Report for 1871-72, III, pl. IXVI, 3.

1. CGSG., II, p. 48.

2. For a detailed account see MMC., pp. 28ff.

3. See Chap. V.

popularity of the Ceylonese Mahāyāna sculpture during this time we may cite two Nepalese manuscripts written in eleventh century Bengali script which show that Ceylon was regarded by Nepalese Buddhists as an important centre of Mahāyānism¹. The first manuscript written around 1015 A.D. contains miniature paintings depicting Mahāyāna deities of Ceylon such as Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi and Jambhala. The second is a copy of the Prajñāpāramitā text written around 1071 A.D. also containing paintings of Mahāyāna deities of Ceylon.

Thus literary, epigraphic and sculptural monuments of the ninth and tenth centuries point to a period of extensive Mahāyāna activities.

The Nikāyaśāṅgrahaya records that Sena II (853-887) brought back the glory of the 'true doctrine' and placed guards round the coast to prevent the arrival of 'false monks' (saddharmapratirūpa)². It is to be noted

1. Cambridge University Library MS, No.Add.1643. See also EIB., pp.15-27.

2. In this connection, Ns. cites the following strophe alleged to be a quotation from the Cūlavamsa which however is not found in the present recension.

Saddhammapatirūpānam disvā loke pavattanam
Gaṇhāpesi tathā rakkham sāgarante samantato.

that there is no mention of 'heretical' sects in the chronicles from the period of Sena II up to the Coḷa conquest of the early eleventh century.

Although barriers were placed against the propagation of Mahāyāna ideas during the time of Sena II, a century later Mahāyānism was apparently again in favour in the royal court.¹ Tāranātha records the visit of one of the most prominent Vajrayānists to the island at the invitation of a king of Ceylon. Ratnākaraśānti who was the abbot of the Somapurī monastery,² came to Ceylon with two hundred Mahāyāna texts. He propagated the doctrine in Ceylon for seven years and established five hundred Mahāyānasūtra teachers.

"Er [Ācārya Ratnākaraśānti] brachte volle zweihundert Mahāyānasūtras mit und predigte sieben Jahre in Siṃhala. Und es entstanden fünfhundert Mahāyānasaṅghas; die Sūtraschulen verbreiteten sich ausserordentlich."³

On his return to India, Ratnākaraśānti was appointed

1. R.A.L.H.Gunawardana, History of Buddhism ...p.373.

2. For Somapurī monastery see ASIAR., 1927-8. pp.105-6.

3. Albert Grünwedel, Tāranātha's Edelsteinmine, das Buch von den Vermittlern der sieben Inspirationen, Petrograd, 1914, p.106.

by the king to the post of dvārapandita at the Vikramaśīla monastery. The historicity of Ratnākaraśānti (or Śāntipa) is born out by the fact that he is mentioned in the Blue Annals as a prominent teacher who held the post of dvārapandita of the eastern gate of the Vikramaśīla monastery.¹

It is significant that during the tenth century the Mahāvihāra upholders of the orthodox tradition were subject to Vajrayāna influences as is evidenced by the manner in which Kassapa V (914-923) elaborates on Vajrayāna ideas in his Dhampiyā Aṭuvā Gātapadaya.² That this king is considered a true follower of the Mahāvihāra traditions, is reflected in the following description in the Cūlavamsa.

"... deeply learned, a preacher of the true doctrine, practised in all the arts, adroit in proving what is right and what is not right ... standing firmly in the teaching of the Leader on the path to deliverance, not to be shaken by all the storms of other opinions..."³

1. Blue Annals, tr. , G.N. Roerich, Calcutta, 1949 , pt.I, pp.205-6.

2. For a detailed discussion see p. 163 f.

3. Cv., 52.39-41.

The fact that the king's religious ideas were held in high esteem by the chronicler reveals that Vajrayāna concepts had penetrated into the Mahāvihāra orthodoxy and had found acceptance by this time.

There is also evidence that the Mahāyāna practice of enshrining dharmadhātu has been absorbed into the religious system at the Mahāvihāra, though in a different garb. Kassapa V had the Dhammasaṅgaṇī (dhammasaṅgaṇikan pottham) inscribed on tablets of gold, adorned with jewels, placed in a shrine in the centre of the city and held a festival. His own son was entrusted with the task of guarding this sacred book (dhammapotthaka). Every year the king carried the book in a great procession to the relic shrine of a monastery and held a festival on a large scale.¹ This description in the chronicle is confirmed by a tenth-century Sinhalese inscription in which a person describes himself as the guardian of relics at the shrine of Dhamsaṅguṇu.²

Two weathered Sinhalese slab inscriptions of the same period found in the precincts of the Pubbārāma at

1. Cy., 52.49-56.

2. EZ., III, p.133.

Puliyāṅkulama in Anurādhapura also refer to the Dharma-dhātu¹. The inscriptions are dated to be in the reign of Abhā Salamevan who may be either Kassapa V (914-923) or Dappula IV (924-935). One of the two inscriptions, according to Paranavitana, records a benefaction made for the daily supply of rice to a person who performed a certain duty connected with the daham-daya (Dharmadhātu). Paranavitana surmises that this referred to the recitation of the book Dharmadhātu. In the second inscription too, there occurs the word daham-daya, though no more information can be gained.

A bronze label found at Anurādhapura and now deposited in the Colombo Museum throws further light on the existence of a book called Dharmadhātu (Sin. Daham-daya) in the tenth century.² The bronze contains the Sinhalese inscription "Dahamdā de patek" which means "two leaves from the Dahamdā (Dharmadhātu)" and suggests that the label was attached to two copper sheets inscribed with excerpts from the Dharmadhātu in preparation for enshrining it in a stūpa. It is interesting to note that

1. CJSG., II, p.45.

2. Ibid., II, p.46; Spolia Zeylanica, Vol.VI, p.74

the inscription is written in the tenth-century Sinhalese characters and that the two words de patek are repeated in Nāgari characters of the same period, probably indicating the mystic efficacy attached to the Nāgari Script.

There is another piece of evidence to show that by the tenth century Mahāvihāra admitted Vajrayāna influences. It was Ayrton who first pointed out that the capitals of the pillars of a temple within the precincts of the Thūpārāma on the South-East side represented not a lotus or a tooth¹ but a trident (vajra)². Commenting on this, Hocart points out that this form of trident is similar to the dorja or thunderbolt of Tibet which is usually held by Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas.³

After a study of sculptures at Galvihāra, Polonnaruva and of other literary and archeological data, P.E.E. Fernando has proved that Tāntrism in Ceylon was a living force in the twelfth century.⁴ Fernando's conclusion

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1. It was earlier mistaken to be the temple of the Tooth.
 2. A.M.Hocart, 'Archeological Summary', CJSG., II, pp.80-81 & pl.LII & LIII.
 3. See K.D.Dikshit, 'Six Sculptures from Mahoba', Mem. ASI, No.8
 4. 'Tāntric influence on the sculptures at Galvihāra, Polonnaruva, UCR., Vol. 18-19, 1960, 61, pp.50-66

rests mainly on the iconographic features of two seated Buddha figures at Galvihāra¹ which according to him have been influenced by Pāla sculpture. The first example is a Buddha in the dhyānamudra seated on an āsana, of which the dado is carved with alternating figures of the viśvavajra and of the lion. There is a makara-torana at the back of the figure consisting of three cross bars arched in the middle and terminating in makara heads. On either side of the arch are representations of two vimānas inside which miniature Dhyāni Buddha figures are carved. On the outer side of the vimānas are miniature representations of stūpas. The whole sculpture which resembles stelae in Bihar and Bengal is according to Fernando, suggestive of Tāntric practices and is meant to be a Tāntric mandala.

The second example is also a seated Buddha in dhyānamudrā found inside an excavated cave known as Vijjādhara-guhā at Galvihāra. As in the first instance, the dado of the āsana is decorated with alternating figures of the viśvavajra and a lion. At the back of the

1. For a detailed description of these sculptures see ASCAR., 1907, pp.7-17

Buddha figure is a makaratorana with only one makara head on each side flanked by figures of vyālas. Above the head is the underside of a chattrā and behind the head is a halo. On both sides of the figure are two standing figures of cāmara-dhārīs, probably designed to represent Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara. On both sides of the Buddha's halo are two small figures with only the upper part of their bodies visible; these are believed to represent Brahmā and Viṣṇu.

Fernando adds that Tāntrism received a new impetus at the hands of Parākramabāhu I (1153-1186). The king built "a charming dhāraṇīghara for the recitation of magic incantations"¹ and "a maṇḍala-mandira for listening to the birth stories of the great Sage which were related by a teacher appointed there for the purpose."² Fernando believes that the dhāraṇīghara was a house where followers of Tāntrism met to recite dhāraṇīs. The word Maṇḍala-mandira suggests a hall for the performance of Tāntric rituals. According to the Tantrayāna, maṇḍala is a magic

1. Brāhmaṇehi tato santim kāretum Hemamandiram
Parivattanattham mantānam manuññaṃ Dhāraṇīgharam

Cv., 73.71

2. Tatthatthācariyenātha bhāsītāni mahesino
Jātakāni nisāmetum rammam Maṇḍalamandiram

Cv., 73.72

circle which indicates the position of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas through graphic representations or through symbols assigned to these divinities. According to the Hevajratantra, the ordering of the maṇḍala and the initiation of a pupil should take place in a maṇḍalā-gāra.¹ Fernando argues that what Parākramabāhu built was a hall for Tāntric worship, though the author of the Cūlavamsa confused these representations of Bodhisattvas with Jātaka stories telling about the lives of the Bodhisattvas.

Parākramabāhu also built a house called the pañcasattati-mandira "for the reception of the magic water and of the magic thread given him by the yellow-robed ascetics."² The word pañcasattati, according to Fernando, is suggestive of a Tāntric text (though no text is known by this name) like the Saptasaptati which is a commentary on the Vajracchedikā.

Fernando also refers to the name Vijjādhara-guhā given in the Cūlavamsa to the excavated cave at Galvihāra.

1. The Hevajratantra, ed. D.L.Snellgrove, London, 1959, pt.II, p.34.

2. Parittodakasuttam ca kāsāyavasaneh' atha Dattam vatīhi dhāretum Pañcasattatimandiram,

In Tāntric terminology the word vidyādhara denotes a person who is possessed of mantras employed in Tāntric ritual in addition to the generally known meaning of a superhuman being with magical power. The term vidyādhara appears to be identical in meaning with the term dhāraṇī; for instance, a certain text now extant only in a Chinese version is known by the alternative names Vidyādhara-piṭaka and Dhāraṇīpiṭaka.¹ Thus the name Vijjādhara-guhā strongly suggests a place associated with Tāntric worship such as the repetition of dhāraṇī.

Fernando has also cited the existence of some incomplete monuments at Tantri-malai² which are very similar to those at Galvihāra. The name Tantri-malai (Tantri Hill), where the monuments are situated, is also referred to as further evidence for the association of the monuments with Tāntrism.³ As traces of influence of Tāntric forms of sculpture on those of Ceylon, even before the time of Parākramabāhu I, Fernando refers to the stone stele at Nālanda Geḍige.⁴ The Nālanda Geḍige which is dated about

1. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, 'The Vidyādhara-piṭaka', JRAS., 1895, p.433 & p.435.

2. For a description of monuments see ASCAR., 1896, pp.7f.

3. John Still, 'Tantrimalai', JRASC., Vol.XXII pp.81f.

4. For an account of the monuments see ASCAR., 1910-11, pp.43-50.

the eighth century is evidently an image house where Tāntric rituals are performed. The stele at the Nālanda Gedige which resembles the stelae of the Pāla period contains the figure of a deity with two attendants on either side, one in an attitude of worship, and the other holding an unidentifiable object. Fernando presumes that the main figure is that of Avalokiteśvara.

Fernando's views have been rejected by Mudiyanse.¹ In addition to some iconographic details, Mudiyanse points out that by the twelfth century the Hindus formed a part of the population and that the dhāraṇīghara was a place of worship for Hindus. He argues that Hinduism unlike Mahāyānism, did not suffer persecution in Ceylon and that Hinduism was in India much given to Tāntric rituals. This argument, however, is untenable in view of the Buḍdhist character underlying the national sentiments in Ceylon against the invading Hindu armies. Furthermore, even if the Dhāraṇīghara was a place of whorship for Hindus, this does not point to the absence of Mahāyāna influence. On the contrary, both forms of Tāntric practice, Hindu and Buddhist, were close to

1. MMC., Appendix A. pp.107ff.

each other. The influence of Hindu Tāntrism would automatically imply the acceptability of Mahāyānist Tāntric ideas because of the continuing influence of the Mahāyāna in the preceding centuries. It is reasonable to assume that Tāntric influences would have emanated more from Buddhist than Hindu tradition.

Mudiyanse's denial of the existence of Tāntric influence in the twelfth century rests largely on the assumption that after Parākramabāhu's purification and unification of the saṅgha, Mahāyāna ideas vanished from Ceylon. Mudiyanse has admitted that there was strong influence of the Tantrayāna in Ceylon from the seventh century down to the beginning of the eleventh century. His belief that the unification resulted in the expulsion from Ceylon of all non-orthodox ideas is not upheld by R.A.L.H. Gunawardana who made an extensive study of the saṅgha of the period. Gunawardana¹ has pointed out that the 'purification' did not amount to the suppression of Dharmaruci, Sāgalika and Vaitulyavāda nikāyas, nor did the 'unification' result in the imposition of the supremacy of the Mahāvihāra as

1. The History of Buddhist Saṅgha, pp.473ff.

recorded in the Nikāyasaṅgrahaya and accepted by Eliot¹ and Paranavitana.² Gunawardana has also attempted to prove that the 'purification' was concerned only with disciplinary matters and did not deal with doctrinal issues. Many bhikkhūs did not apparently respond to the conciliation; some left the country and others left the Order, presumably to return at a better turn of events.³ In this connection it is to be noted that the monks of the Abhayagiri and Jetavana monasteries were described as late as the time of Parākramabāhu I,⁴ as followers of the Vetullavāda.

Gunawardana has given further evidence for the existence of the unorthodox views of the Abhayagiri monks even after the purification as is reflected in a work written at the Mahāvihāra. Sumaṅgala in his

1. HB., Vol.III, p.41.

2. UHC., Vol. I, Part II, pp.567f.

3. Cv., 78.12-13

4. Abhayagirivāsī ca bhikkhū Jetavanānuge
Mahāsenanarindassa bhinne paṭṭhāya kālato
Abuddhavacanam yeva Vetullapitakādikam
Dīpente buddhavācā ti paṭipattiparammukhe
Mahāvihāravāsīhi samaggavitum ārabhi
Asesagūṇasālīhi kācamhe ratanehi va. Cv., 78.20-23

Abhidhammatthavikāsinī criticises the views of the Abhayagiri monks in a number of instances.¹ Gunawardana has also furnished evidence for the influence of the Vinaya teachings of the Abhayagiri monks on the Mahāvihāra; this is reflected in two other commentatorial works written after the unification, i.e. Sāratthadīpanī of Sāriputta² and Vimativinodanī of Coḷiya Kassapa.³

Strong influence of Mahāyāna ideas through the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries up to at least the end of the fourteenth century, the time the Nikāyaśāṅgrahaya was written, is attested by a remark in this work. It records that Vājiriyavāda observed as a secret cult from the days of Sena I was followed by 'the foolish' and 'the ignorant'. So was Nilapaṭaḍaśana.⁴

We would also like to point out that many twelfth century Sinhālese works either contain quotations from or refer to Buddhist Sanskrit sources, thus testifying to the wide circulation of Mahāyāna texts

1. Abhidhammatthavikāsinī, ed. A.P. Buddhadatta, pp.46, 128-129, 136, 169, 352, 364-365, 387.

2. Sāratthadīpanī, ed. Devarakkhita, 1914, pp.425f.

3. Vimativinodanī, ed. Beratuḍāve Dhammādhāra Tissa, Colombo 1935, pp.94ff.

4. Ns., tr.p.18

during this time¹. For instance, the third verse of the Maṅgala Sutta is quoted in Sanskrit in the Sinhalese Abhidharmāṛthasaṅgrahasannaya. The Vyāghrī Jātaka and the Hasti Jātaka are referred to in the twelfth-century Sinhalese work Sasadāvata. The Mahābodhivamsagāṭapadaya also contains a verse which is ascribed to Candragomin, the author of the Śiṣyalekha dharmakāvya. Diṇṇāga, the celebrated Buddhist philosopher and logician, is referred to in the Jātaka-aṭuvā-gāṭapadaya.

Sinhalese works of the thirteenth century contain more references to Buddhist Sanskrit works. Thus the Sinhala Viśuddhimārgasannaya² written by Parākramabāhu II, quotes from Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakośa and Aśvaghoṣa's Saundaranandakāvya.

The Dharmapradīpikāva of Gurulugomi contains two verses from Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra, six verses from Āryaśūra's Jātakamālā and four from Dharmakīrti's Pramānavārttikā³.

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1. The following information is based on C.E. Godakumbura's 'References to Buddhist Sanskrit writers in Sinhalese literature', UCR., Vol.I, 1943, pp.86-93.
 2. Ed. M.Dharmaratne, 1890, Vol.V, pp.51,317, Vol.I, p.42.
 3. Dharmapradīpikāva, ed.Dharmakīrti Śrī Dharmārāma, Vidyālaṅkāra Press,1951,pp.114-115, pp.103-104, p.3.

The evidence we have presented above tends to show that Mahāyānism was a living force in Ceylon in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in spite of the fact that no new elements of Buddhism were introduced into the island from India, where Buddhism was in decline at the time.

From the thirteenth century onwards, evidence of Mahāyāna influence in Ceylon is not found in epigraphic or sculptural remains, presumably because such material was less numerous in this period. Some Mahāyāna doctrines, however, became apparently absorbed into the main stream, as is represented in the Sinhalese works produced during this time. It is largely from these works on which we shall mainly draw for discussions in subsequent chapters.

Chapter II

The Ideal of Buddhahood

Among the main distinctions between the Theravāda and Mahāyāna is the differentiation between the two schools' teleologies, whereby the goal of the Theravāda is the attainment of arahantship and, the goal of Mahāyāna is Buddhahood. These two types of achievement aimed at by the two schools of thought imply both philosophical and methodological variations, the detailed analysis of which would be extraneous to the scope of this thesis.

The term arahant was "adopted by the Buddhists as a technical term for one who has attained the Summum Bonum of religious aspiration (nibbāna)"¹-from a word that has been in use as far back as the Vedic period, meaning 'deserving', 'worthy', 'to be fit'.² According to the Theravāda, arahatta³ is attained at the eradication of all defilements and at the realization of the Four

1. PTSD.

2. Cf. Rgveda, 2.33.10. where Rudra is addressed three times as arhat.

3. For details, see I.B.Horner, The early Buddhist theory of man perfected. A study of the arahant, London, 1936.

Noble Truths. This is the culmination of four stages or ways namely, Sotāpattimagga, (way of stream - attainment) Sakadāgāmicimagga (way of once-returning) Anāgāmicimagga (way of non-returning) and Arahattamagga (way of arahantship).¹

However, the Theravāda did accept that Buddhahood was attainable by a selected few as is evidenced in the life of Gotama, his predecessors and the future Buddha Metteyya. But unlike in the Mahāyāna the goal of Buddhahood was never meant to be a possible career for every one. According to the Pali canon, the birth of a Buddha is a very rare occurrence.

Kadāci karahaci Tathāgata loka uppaṃjanti²

It is only once in many kalpas that a Buddha is born. Vipassī attained Buddhahood 91 kalpas ago, Sikhi and Vesabhu 31 kalpas ago, and the present Bhadrakalpa has seen four Buddhas, Kakusandha, Konāgamana, Kassapa and Sākyamuni.³

1. Some Mahāyāna authors have recognized the four stages of śrotāpanna, sakrdāgāmin, and the arhat as the preliminary stages of a Bodhisattva's career. See Laṅkāvatāra, the Avadānaśataka, the Daśabhūmikasūtra, the Prajñāpāramitā and the Kāraṇḍavyūha.

2. D.II, p.139.

3. Ibid., II, p.2.

Thus the idea of arahantship and Buddhahood as conceived in the Theravāda demonstrates two distinct systems of attaining spiritual enlightenment, the former being the goal open to every human being in general, and the latter, the ideal attained by a very small number. The attainment of arahantship did not lead to Buddhahood, which was an exclusive field. Nevertheless, it is also implied that arahantship was not essentially distinct from Buddhahood, one of the ten titles of the Buddha being 'arahant'. When arahantship was made open, as the highest attainment, for the average human being by the Theravādins, the Buddhahood was consequently elevated to an extra-ordinary state, accessible to few.

Arahantship was the supreme goal of a recluse; Buddha was superior to the men and the gods. To quote from the Kassapa-sihanāda Sutta,:

"... But so far as regards the really noblest, the highest intelligence, I am aware of no one else who is equal to myself, much less superior. And it is I who have gone the furthest therein; that is, in the highest Wisdom (of the Path) ... And from immediately after his initiation the venerable Kassapa remained alone and separate, earnest, zealous

and master of himself. And ere long he attained to that supreme goal for the sake of which clansmen go forth from the household life into the homeless state..."¹

A further development of the conception of Buddhahood is to be seen in the idea of the Paccekabuddha (Sk. Pratyekabuddha).

"Dve'me bhikkhave buddhā?

Katame dve?

Tathāgato ca araham sammā sambuddho paccekabuddho ca."²

The Majjhima Nikāya and others mention them as hermits outside the Buddhist order, who have attained enlightenment without the help of anybody and do not possess the ability to preach the teachings to the others.³ The Pugga-lapaññatti, a text of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, defines Paccekabuddha as one who has not attained supreme and perfect knowledge and has no mastery of the fruits.

"Idh'ekacco puggalo pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu

sāmaṃ saccāni abhisambujjhati na ca tattha sabbaññutam

1. Dialogues of the Buddha, II, PTS, SBB, tr. T.W.Rhys Davids, London, 1899, pp.237-240.

2. A.I, p.77.

3. M., III.p.86; S., I,p.92; Ud., 50.

pāpuṇāti na ca phalesu vasibhāvaṃ: ayaṃ vuccati
puggalo paccekasambuddho."¹

It is in the non-canonical literature that we find emphasis on the conception of Paccekabuddha as a spiritual hierarchical status. The Milindapañha (first c.A.D)² compares the potency of each of the three stages of perfection with Paccekabuddha occupying the middle rung, Buddhahood being the highest and arahantship the lowest, beginning with the four preliminary stages prior to arahantship.

"... arahanto khīṇāsavā dhotamalā vantakilesā
vusitavanto katakaraṇīyā ohitabhārā anuppattasadatthā
parikkhīṇabhavasamyojanā pattapaṭṭisambhidā sāvakabhū-
misu parisuddhā...

... paccekabuddhā, sayambhuno anācariyakā, ekacārino
khaggavisāṇakappā ...

... sammāsambuddhā sabbaññuno dasabaladharā
catuvesārajja-visāradā, aṭṭhārasahi buddhadhammehi
samannāgatā, anantajinā anāvaraṇañānā, ..."³

However, neither the Milindapañha nor any other Pali

1. Pug., p.14.

2. See A.L.Basham, The wonder that was India, London, 1954 p.227 & I.B.Horner, Milinda's Questions, London, 1964 Vol.I, pp.XXIf.

3. Miln., pp.104-105.

work gives the faintest impression that Buddhahood was a goal for the average worshipper as much as were the other two i.e. Paccekabuddhahood and arahantship. It was in the hands of the Sarvāstivādins that the three stages of attainment, acquired new meanings and dimensions. The first traces of this development appear in the works of the Sarvāstivāda school.

For instance, we read in the Divyāvadāna, a work of the third century A.D. as follows:

"... kaiścin mokṣabhāgiyāni kuśalamūlāny utpāditāni
kaiścin nirvedhabhāgiyāni kaiścic chrotāpattiphalaṃ
sāksātkṛtaṃ kaiścit sakṛdāgāmiphalaṃ kaiścid anāgā-
miphalaṃ kaiścit sarvakleśaprahāṇād arhattvaṃ sāk-
sātkṛtaṃ kaiścic chrāvakabodhau cittāny utpāditāni
kaiścit pratyekabodhau kaiścid anuttarāyāṃ samyak-
sambodhau cittāny utpāditāni...¹

"... in some the roots of goodness that form a part of release were produced, in some those (four) roots that form a part of penetration, in some the fruit of Entering the Stream was realized, in some the fruit of the Once-returner, in some the fruit of the Non-returner, in some

1. Divy., p.50.

arhatship with the abandonment of all the vices was realized, in some the thought of (attaining) the disciples' enlightenment was produced, in some the thought of a pratyekabuddha's enlightenment, and in some the thought of complete enlightenment was produced."¹

The mention of the fact that some aspired to Śrāvakabodhi, some to Pratyekabodhi and some to Samyaksambodhi shows that Buddhahood has been accepted by the Sarvāstivādins as a possible career for everyone as much as the other two by the time the Divyāvadāna was compiled.

It was this concept of the three bodhis that led the Mahāyānists to develop their own idea of a Bodhisattva. We shall here consider in brief the new interpretations given by the Sarvāstivādins to the three stages of attainment. The outstanding contribution of the Sarvāstivādins was that they formalized the concept of the three bodhis, (traces of which were found in the Pali canon) as a recognized set of aspirations any one may aim at. Terms like bodhi and śrāvaka were given new connotations. The term bodhi was used in the Pali canonical and commentarial literature to denote spiritual attainment of

1. Trans. E.J. Thomas, History of Buddhist thought, p.169.

Buddhahood or Paccekabuddhahood or arahantship. The

Pali Text Society Dictionary defines bodhi as

"knowledge, enlightenment, the knowledge possessed by a Buddha, ... the stage of enlightenment of the Paccekabuddha... tree of wisdom", while the Childers Dictionary gives it as " the knowledge possessed by a Buddha, supreme or infinite knowledge ... the supernatural knowledge of an arahant." The concept of bodhi thus amounted to a concept of three specific and separate bodhis. Bodhi was never used in Pali to denote 'a general formula for spiritual attainment open to everybody'; in other words, it was not a concept implying that the Path to Buddhahood was one of the three ways to enlightenment to which every individual could aspire.

The Sarvāstivādins seem to have preferred the term śrāvaka (Pali sāvaka) in place of arahant of the Theravādins. Sāvaka from \sqrt{sru} to listen was used in the Pali works to denote "a hearer, listener, pupil, a disciple..."¹ but not an arahant."² There have been instances however,

1. Childers, Dictionary of the Pali Language.

2. PTSD. Examples of this kind are to be found in the D., I, 164; II, 104; III, 47, 52; A., I.88; M., I.234; Sn., II, 26; J., I, 229.

where sāvaka is used in place of arahant; the word ariya in verse 22 of the Dhammapada is commented upon as Buddhapacceka-buddhasāvaka¹.

In the earlier Mahāyāna works like the Saddharma-puṇḍarīkasūtra, Śrāvaka² has been exclusively used in reference to bodhi, namely Śrāvaka-bodhi. In the later Mahāyāna literature, the word arhat has been replaced by śrāvaka and the former has disappeared. The Daśabhūmikasūtra³ treats the Śrāvaka with some condescension and says that the Śrāvakas are so called because they only listen to the preachers and follow them. It should be noted that the replacement of arhat by śrāvaka and the lowering of the former's status conceived in the Theravāda, took place concurrently, thereby laying the emphasis on the Bodhisattva ideal. Thus the Sarvāstivāda concept of the three bodhis represents an intermediate stage in the transformation of the arahant ideal of the Theravāda into the Bodhisattva ideal of the Mahāyāna.

1. DhpA., I, p.230.

2. In the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra, Śrāvaka has been taken to mean one 'making others hear, i.e. a preacher.'

3. Daśa., 25, line 23.

The three bodhis are better known by the term yāna in the Mahāyāna works. Yāna is not known to have been used in Pali literature in reference to the three bodhis.¹ Yāna has been given in the Pali Dictionary² as "going, means of motion, carriage, vehicle, etc." In the Theravāda in general, the word has been applied, to the eightfold Path in the canon and commentaries, devalokam yāpetum samathatā ... atthasamāpatti-yānam:³ magga'atthaṅgika-yāna.⁴ Thus the term yāna as conceived in the Theravāda refers to the internal classification of spiritual attainment.

The word yāna in the Mahāyāna, however, is almost exclusively applied to the various approaches to the attainment of Buddhahood by separate schools of thought; so that the approach of the Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas and the Buddhas constitute the three separate yānas commonly referred to by the Mahāyāna as the 'three yānas'. This usage of the term yāna has also engendered the 'gross'

1. Childers, (Dictionary of the Pali language) pointed out that there is no trace of the three yānas in the Southern Buddhism. As we have already observed, the germ of the three Northern Buddhist yānas existed in Southern Buddhism, but was not known by the term yāna but bodhi.

2. PTSD.

3. Sn., 139; SnA., 184

4. Th., 2,389; ThA., 257.

division into Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna, definitely an invention by the former.

The use of the word yāna in the meaning preferred by the Mahāyāna schools is quite a common occurrence in Sinhalese texts. The earliest reference to the three-fold yāna is found in the Dhampiyā Atuvā Gātapadaya, (908-918) a glossary on the Dhammapada Atthakathā.

"Yānattaya-mukhena vinevajānaṃ sāsati anusāsati satthā."¹ This is the explanation given to the word satthā appearing in the following verse in the Dhammapada Atthakatha

Taṃtaṃ kāraṇaṃ āgama dhammadhammesu kovido
sampattasaddhammapado satthā dhammapadaṃ subhaṃ."²

It is interesting to note that the Sinhala author made use of the concept of the three yānas, as suggested by the phrase, yānattaya-mukhena, in commenting on the word satthā. As indicated above, the phrase yānattaya-mukhena is entirely unknown in the canonical, commentatorial or even in the later Pali literature. The phrase yānattaya-mukhena could well be a direct translation into Pali of the Sanskrit word as well as the Mahāyāna concept.

1. DAG., p.3.

2. DhA., p.1

The mixed Sinhalese translation of this term, i.e. yānatraya mukhayen occurs in the Abhidharmāṛthasaṅgraha-
hasannaya (1153-1186 AD), a work written in heavily
Sanskritized Sinhalese.

"Sattvopakārasampat is explained thus. It is twofold, namely, 'innate feelings' (āśaya) and the 'means' (prayoga). Āśaya is having beneficent thoughts always towards beings who are opponents [of Buddha] such as Devadatta, and understanding the time when the senses reach maturity (indriyaparipākakālāvagama) in the case of theras such as Bhadraji who possessed immature senses. Discourse that leads to the eradication of all suffering (sarvaduḥkhanairyānika dharmadeśanā) is preached by the means of the three careers (yānatraya mukhayen) by the Buddha who does not expect profit or reward in return, to beings other than those mentioned above. Such a discourse is known as the means (prayoga)."¹

The following is a passage from the Sinhalese Anāgata-
vamsaya (1325-1333 AD), a work based on the Pali Anāgatavaṃsa
where the term yāna is used as a generic term for the

1. Abhss., p.5

three ways by which a Buddhist career can be pursued while bodhi is applied to the method of achievement by each individual methods of attainment. This nomenclature has of course been imposed as the result of the Mahāyāna approach.

"Until such time as buddhaguna comes on to the palm of one's hand, one should admit beings into the three-fold career (yānatraya) such as Śrāvaka-bodhi and assist them in maturing their wisdom ...; thereby one completes the Prajñā Pāramitā."¹

The term trividha-bodhi appears in the Karmavibhāgaya, (1200-1225AD), a Sinhalese work on the kuśala and akuśala karma. According to this work, the three-fold pitaka (pitakatraya) is the path to the three-fold bodhi (trividha bodhi). The association of the three-fold bodhi with the three-fold pitaka suggests that the Sinhalese author made an attempt to justify the concept of the three bodhis. The passage referred to is as follows:

"The Buddhakāra-kadhammas to be fulfilled by such Mahābodhisattvas should be known from the three pitakas. The three pitakas are similar to the sun which discloses all objects that could be seen

1. S. Anāgav., pp.49,50.

by those who have eyes, and the three pitakas are the path to the three-fold bodhi for meritorious wise men."¹

The same term, trividha bodhi appears in the Sadḍharmaratnāvaliya (1220-1293), a collection of Buddhist stories.

"Dāna causes heavenly and other happiness. It leads to every prosperity ... It helps man to attain to one of the three bodhis (trividha-bodhi) in accordance with one's adhimukti."²

The pure Sinhala term tuntarā-bodhi in lieu of the Sinhalese-Sanskrit term yānatraya appears for the first time in Sinhalese literature in the Pūjāvaliya, a narrative work of 1266 A.D. And also the phrase tuntarā bodhiyen ektarābodhiyak (one of the three bodhis) which later became a common expression of spiritual aspiration³ is met with for the first time in this work.

"For these reasons, Buddhahood should be aspired to by good people (satpurusa) in the knowledge that

1. Kmv., p.137

2. Srtmv. p.34.

3. This is a popular aspiration even in the present day in Ceylon.

it is a noble aspiration. The ocean of samsāra should be crossed by attaining to one of the three bodhis (tuntarā-bodhiyen ektarā-bodhiyak.)"¹

The Saddharmaratnākaraya, (1417) also refers to tuntarā-bodhiyen ektarā-bodhiyak.

"Therefore, the wise beings in this world should keep this discourse in mind, accumulate kuśala dharma without admitting the hostile kleśas and should try to attain to one of the three bodhis. (tuntarā bodhiyen ektarā bodhiyak)"²

"More than the fruits (kuśalaphala) of any of these meritorious deeds, the fruit of meditation, even for a moment, on the three signs (tilakunu) of anitya, duhkha and anātma is great. Meditation on the three signs is the highest, because it helps one to attain to one of the three bodhis"(tuntarā bodhiyen ektarā bodhiyak)³

The existence of the concept of the threefold bodhi in Sinhalese works from the tenth century testifies to

1. Piv., p.55

2. Srtnk., p.417.

3. Ibid., p.526.

the fact that Buddhahood was accepted by that time as one of the goals one may aspire to.

There is in the Saddharmaratnākaraya an interesting classification of Buddhas which reflects an attempt to elevate the position of śrāvakas¹. This is mentioned in connection with a description of four types of Buddhas in a story where thera Kālabuddharakṣita preached the Kālakārāma sutta to an enormous gathering which included the king Saddhātissa who had come there in disguise. The four kinds of Buddhas mentioned here are Śruta Buddha, Catussatya Buddha, Pratyeka Buddha and Samyaksambuddha. We may examine here the first two categories which probably fall together into the Śrāvakabodhi. The following are the chief characteristics of the Śruta Buddha. He is well versed in the dhamma, follows the instructions of the teachers, observes fully the navalokottarasaddharma, and advises his antevāsikas and the śiṣyas for the benefit of the two worlds. He imparts the teachings, contributes to the development of the Buddhaśāsana and helps the people to obtain benefits (arthasiddhi) from this world as well as from the next. Catussatya Buddhas are those who have eradicated all kleśas after listening to discourses on the Four Noble Truths, attained

1. Ibid., pp.219-222

to the Four Paths (mārga) and the four fruits (phala), and those who have become prativedhaśāsanānupālakas and agradakṣineyyas being capable of understanding the whole world.

The conventional use of the name Buddha in the Theravāda is Samyaksambuddha and Pratyekabuddha. The idea of a Śrāvakabuddha seems to have been introduced as a concession to the Theravāda tradition notwithstanding the acceptance of Buddha's attributes adopted by the Mahāyāna. However, the description of the Śruta Buddha and the Catussatya Buddha tends to suggest that a certain distinction was made between the two: the former was a true follower of the Buddha's teachings i.e. only an ordinary disciple and the latter attained the Four Noble Truths and was an Arahat.

Coming back to the discussion on yānas, out of the three yānas which underwent further development in the Mahāyāna, ever great emphasis was laid on the third yāna i.e. Buddhayāna. For this (Buddhayāna), they used many other names such as, Mahāyāna, Tathāgatayāna, Bodhisattvayāna. (The other yānas, i.e. the śrāvaka and the pratyekabuddha, were spoken of as Hīnayāna.) However,

references to the threefold yāna are found in abundance even in the later Mahāyāna treatises.

Mahāyānādhimuktānām arthe ... śrāvaka-pratyeka-
buddhayānādhimuktānām¹

Śrāvakayānaṃ ... pratyekabuddhayānaṃ ... mahāyānaṃ²
Trīṇi yānāni śrāvakayānaṃ pratyekabuddhayānaṃ ...
mahāyānaṃ ca³

Curiously enough, the Mahāvvyutpatti speaks of a fourth yāna. Yānakramah ... mahāyānaṃ pratyekabuddhayānaṃ śrāvaka-
kayānaṃ hīnayānaṃ⁴

How the Mahāyānists elaborated upon the conception of the threefold yāna and proved the utmost superiority of the Buddhayāna is rather noteworthy. This is best displayed in the Saddharmapundarikasūtra where the superiority of the 'Mahāyāna' is well asserted without denying the importance of the 'Hīnayāna'. They did not condemn the threefold yāna outright, but tackled the whole issue in a diplomatic manner. They did not say that the Buddha expounded different truths to people with different mental

1. Sūtrāḷ., Vol.I. p.183, line 24-25

2. Ibid., Vol. I, p.168, line 14.

3. Dharmasaṅgraha ed. F.Max Müller, H.Wenzel, K.Kassawara Oxford, 1885, II.

4. Mahāvvyutpatti, ed. Sakaki, Kyoto 1928 LIX p.95

dispositions. The Buddha taught only one Truth. But the Buddha knew the mediocre disposition of the majority of his disciples and expounded the truth in modified form so that they might comprehend it. This they called the skilful device (upāya-kaśālyā). The Buddha taught the one and only Buddha career as three-fold, (Buddha-bodhim tridhā vibhāṣye ha prakāśayeyam) namely, Nirvāṇa, to those with lower disposition (hīnādhimukta), pratye-kabuddhahood to those with mediocre disposition and his full teachings to those with high disposition. This was the expedient adopted for the sake of the majority who would not possess the strength of character to wish for supreme enlightenment.¹

The Pūjāvaliya contains elaborate discussions on the high, mediocre and low dispositions and their associations with the three kinds of attainments.

"Of all worthy aspirations, wish for Buddhahood is a noble aspiration for those who possess vīrya as well as those who do not. Among those who accumulate merit with the aspiration for Buddhahood, beings with

1. Eg. Sāmp., p. 55

excessive (adhika) vīrya attain supramundane Buddhahood (Lovuturā-budubava). Those with an ordinary degree (sādhāraṇa) of vīrya attain the extraordinary (asādhāraṇa) Śrāvakabodhi. Thus, one who aspires to Buddhahood will achieve one of the three bodhis. This is similar to the case of a person swimming in a river with three fording places; if he is an adept, he will get off at the first ford, if he misses the first, he will get off at the second, if he fails that too he will certainly get off at the third. Aspiring to Buddhahood is like swimming with the intention of getting off at the first fording place. Just as one can be certain of getting off at one ford or other, so the man who aspires to Buddhahood is certain of attaining one of the three bodhis.¹

"... those with excessive (adhika) vīrya who aspire to Buddhahood eventually become supramundane Buddhas. Those with mediocre (madhyama) vīrya attain to pratyekabuddhahood. Those with least (kanista) vīrya attain Śrāvakabodhi. They do not get immersed in the ocean of samsāra. Therefore

1. Pjv., p.475.

of all aspirations, the aspiration to Buddhahood is the noblest one to those with vīrya and also those without vīrya because wish for Buddhahood is included in all their aspirations. Therefore, those beings aspiring to Buddhahood are similar to monkeys who climb to the topmost branch because they could come to whatever branch they wish to and enjoy leaves and fruits. Furthermore, they are like clever wrestlers (jñānamallava) who do the 'neck-hold' (grīvābandhana) because with that one hold, the whole body is bound. Also it is like stretching out one's arm to the wish-conferring gem because it gives any prosperity wished for, at any time. Furthermore, those who aspire to Buddhahood are similar to those climbing the wish-conferring tree because it gives whatever clothes and ornaments are wished for. They are similar to those divine beings who climb the divine tree called Mañjusaka knowing that they could adorn themselves with any fragrant flowers growing either in the water or on land. They are similar to those wishing for the splendour of the many-coloured god-king (anantavarnadivyarāja) who enjoys any colour though he has but one body. They are similar to the

face of the divine cow (surabhidhenumukha) because it gives any prosperity though it has but one face. For these reasons, good beings should realize that aspiration to Buddhahood is the noblest one; they should aspire to Buddhahood and cross over the ocean of samsāra having attained to one of the three bodhis."¹

The analogies in the above passage bear resemblance to some analogies used in Mahāyāna texts such as the Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra and Saddharmapundarikasūtra.

Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra reads:

"Nikṛṣṭamadyottamavīryam anyat
yānatraye yuktajanāśrayeṇa
Līnaty udārāśayabuddhiyogāt
vīryam tad alpārthamahārtham iṣṭam."²

The following is a relevant passage from Kern's translation of the Saddharmapundarīka.

"Now, Śāriputra, the beings who have become wise have faith in the Tathāgata, the father of the world, and consequently apply themselves to his commandments. Amongst them there are some who, wishing to follow

1. Pjv., p.55.

2. Sūtrāḷ., Vol.I, p.115, line 3-4.

the dictate of an authoritative voice, apply themselves to the commandment of the Tathāgata to acquire the knowledge of the four great truths, for the sake of their own complete Nirvāṇa. These one may say to be those who, coveting the vehicle of the disciples, fly from the triple world, just as some of the boys will fly from that burning house, prompted by a desire of getting a cart yoked with deer. Other beings desirous of the science without a master, of self-restraint and tranquility, apply themselves to the commandment of the Tathāgata to learn to understand causes and effects, for the sake of their own complete Nirvāṇa. These one may say to be those who, coveting the vehicle of the Pratyekabuddhas, fly from the triple world, just as some of the boys fly from the burning house, prompted by the desire of getting a cart yoked with goats. Others again desirous of the all-knowing, the knowledge of Buddha, the knowledge of the self-born one, the science without a master, apply themselves to the commandment of the Tathāgata to learn to understand the knowledge, powers, and freedom from hesitation of the Tathāgata, for the sake of the common weal and happiness, out of compassion

to the world, for the benefit, weal and happiness of the world at large, both gods and men, for the sake of the complete Nirvāṇa of all beings. These one may say to be those who, coveting the great vehicle, fly from the triple world. Therefore, they are called Bodhisattva Mahasattvas. They may be likened to those among the boys who have fled from the burning house prompted by the desire of getting a cart yoked with bullocks."¹

It is said that the Bodhisattva doctrine was promulgated by some Buddhist leaders as a protest against the lack of altruism and missionary activity among the monks of the period.² The arhats were getting too selfish and worked for their own liberation. The duty of teaching and helping all human beings was neglected. Hence a movement to counteract the contemplative and cloistered attitude of the monks was deemed necessary. And also it came as a campaign against the theory of arhatship, as the arhats discouraged the attainment of perfect wisdom of a Buddha,

2. Har Dayal, The Bodhisattva doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit literature, London, 1932, pp.2-3.

1. Sdmp., tr.pp.80.

thereby depriving the world of the services that could be rendered by Buddhas.

The Mahāyānist authors not only emphasized the altruistic nature of the Bodhisattvas but also accused the arhats for their selfcentered and egoistic attitude. The Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra, Puṇḍarīka, Prajñā-pāramitā-śatasa-
hasra and a number of other Mahāyāna texts show how arhats and pratyekabuddhas strive for their own liberation, and not for the good of humanity.

Evam parārthāśrayadeśitāt mahāyānadharmāt tesu tesu
sūtresu uktah puṇyodayo mahāml labhyate. Na tu svārthāś-
rayadeśitāt śrāvakayānadharmāt.¹

This emphasis on the altruistic aspect in a Bodhi-sattva is well depicted in Sinhalese literary works. In the Saddharmaratnākaraya, dramatic emphasis is laid on the selfless nature of a Samyaksambuddha, in connection with the definitions² of the four kinds of Buddhas (Śruta, Catussatya, Pratyeka and Samyaksambuddha).

"If he can render some service to other even if he lives in asipatravana, he feels as if he is in

1. Sūtrāḷ., Vol. I, p.53.

2. See. above

nandanavana. If no service is done, even if he lives in nandanavana, he feels as if he is in asipatravana...

... He is reluctant to stay in heavens and the Brahma worlds because there is no service for others, though comfortable for himself. ... though other beings have to live the due span of life ... as it is a hindrance for the bodhisambhāra that he is fulfilling for the sake of others. ... he can go to sleep, close his eyes and make the wish to be born in the human world... this is adhimuktikālakriyā. Only a Samyaksambodhisattva is capable of doing this, not a Pratyekabodhisattva or any other being...."¹

In the propagation of the Bodhisattva doctrine, the Mahāyānists made every effort to assert the superiority of the Bodhisattvas over the Śrāvakas which inevitably resulted in the subsequent lowering of the status of Śrāvakas. The chief disciples of the Buddha who held the highest positions in the Theravāda order, such as Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Ānanda, Rāhula, Kāśyapa, Mahākatyāyana etc. are represented in a state of self-reproach in the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra, since they had to follow an inferior

1. Srtnk., p.222.

career due to the fact that they did not possess the capability to understand the true teachings of the Buddha.

In due course, however, they became intellectually mature and attained the supreme enlightenment. The following words are put into the mouth of the chief disciple Śāriputra.

"O Lord, we have been dismissed by the Lord with the inferior vehicle ... Instantly, however, O Lord, I felt that it was our own fault, not the Lord's. For had we regarded the Lord at the time of his giving the all-surpassing demonstration of the law, that is, the exposition of supreme, perfect, enlightenment, then, O Lord, we should have become adepts in those Laws. But because without understanding the mystery of the Lord, we, at the moment of the Bodhisattvas not being assembled, heard only in a hurry, caught, meditated, minded, took to heart the first lessons pronounced on the law, therefore, O Lord, I used to pass day and night in self-reproach. (But) today O Lord, I have reached complete extinction ... today O Lord, I have reached arhatship ... O Lord, now that I have heard this wonderful law, which I had not learnt before, announced by the voice from the mouth of the Lord...

I am astonished, great leader, I am charmed to hear this voice. I feel no doubt any more; now I am fully ripe for the superior vehicle... I shall become a Tathāgata undoubtedly, worshipped in the world including the gods."¹

Śāriputra follows the saddharma of innumerable Tathāgatas, worships them, develops bodhicitta, fulfills pāramitās and will become Padmaprabhā Tathāgata, presiding over the buddhakṣetra called Viraja. The treatise also predicts the time that Śāriputra and others will become Buddhas and gives the names they will bear and the names of lokadhātus they will preside over.

The prestige of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana has been entirely shattered, also in the Prajñāpāramitā.

"If this Continent of Jambudvīpa were filled with monks similar in worth to Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana - like a thicket of reeds, bamboos, or sugar cane, of tall grass, or rice or sesamum plants - their wisdom does not approach the wisdom of a Bodhisattva who courses in perfect wisdom by one hundredth part, nor by one thousandth part, nor by

1. Sdmp., tr. pp.60 f.

a 100,000th part; it does not bear number, nor fraction, nor counting, nor similarity, nor comparison- nor resemblance. To such an extent does the wisdom of a Bodhisattva, who, coursing in perfect wisdom, develops it for one day only, surpass the wisdom of all the Disciples and Pratyekabuddhas. And why? Because that wisdom of a Bodhisattva, a great being, is concerned with (winning) Nirvāṇa for all beings. And that would hold true even if not only Jambudvīpa, but if the great trichilicose, or even if all the countless world systems in each of the ten directions were filled with monks similar in worth to Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana."¹

Taking a cursory glance through the Mahāyāna treatises, one may come to the conclusion that the Mahāyāna authors made a vehement attempt to prove that the one and only path was the Buddhayāna, or ekayāna as a protest against the three-fold path. The fact that the Mahāyāna writers carried out a vigorous campaign to prove that there was one and only one yāna and not two or three, and the manner in which they did it afford evidence that the accepted

1. The large sūtra on Perfect Wisdom, tr. Edward Conze, London, 1961, p.24.

doctrine at the time was the threefold yāna. The following references from Mahāyāna treatises are good examples to this effect.¹

Ekam hi yānam, dvitīyaṃ na vidyate
trītiyaṃ, ti naivāsti kadāci loke

ekam hi kāryaṃ dvitīyaṃ na vidyate
na hīnayānena nayanti Buddhāḥ²

(There is only one career, there is no second. There never exists a third in the world. There is only one goal; no second exists. Buddhas never lead men by an inferior career.)

Buddhaiḥ pratyekabuddhaiś ca śrāvakaiś ca niṣevitā,
Mārgas tvam ekā moksasya nāsty anya iti niścayah.³

(The path followed by Buddhas, Pratyekabuddhas and Śrāvakas - you are the only path leading to emancipation. Definitely there is no other path.)

It is said emphatically in the Laṅkāvatāra⁴ that there is really no establishment of various careers

1. As quoted in N.Dutt's Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its relation to Hīnayāna, London, 1930, pp.52-54.

2. Sdmp., p.46

3. Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā. p.3

4. Laṅk., pp.65, 243.

but one career. In order to rescue ignorant people, the Buddha spoke of three careers.

Triyānam ekayānam ca ayānam ca vadāmy aham
Bālānām mandabuddhīnām āryānām ca viviktatām

In a number of Sinhalese works, attainment of Buddhahood¹ has been accepted as a definite goal one can aspire to although there is no trace of the use of terms such as Buddhayāna or Ekayāna.

The author of the Karmavibhāgaya demonstrates how one may develop a deep desire to attain Buddhahood and proceed to achieve the aims amidst any obstructions. After giving a description of the three ksetras of the Buddha, namely those of janma, ājñā and viśaya, the author of Karmavibhāgaya says the following:

"Any great being who has conducted himself in a course of good behaviour with the intention of saving the samsāra from suffering, ... on seeing the Buddha exercising miracles, on hearing wise men describing the virtues of the Buddha and on seeing all the services done for others, (arthakriyā) develops

1. For an earlier mention of the wish for Buddhahood in Sanskrit inscriptions, see p. 51 ff.

a deep desire for Buddhahood, with the firm determination, 'I will also maintain the Buddhavamsa, the Buddhapraveni and the Buddhadharma' ... all thoughts directed, bent forcussed towards Sambodhi out of beneficial service for beings aspiring to Buddhahood under every Buddha born for the welfare of the beings ... not attaining to Śrāvakabhāva even after seeing many beings releasing themselves from samsāra with the attainment of śrāvakabhāva and thereafter nirvāṇa; with the firm intention, 'I will enter the śāsana, fulfill the Buddhakāradharmas and will become Buddha' ... he perfects the thirty seven bodhipāksikadharmas, ... being peerless in prajñā, śraddhā, vīrya and karuṇā, being non-attached to the people through prajñā ... being in love with people as if with dear sons, through karuṇā... though he has accumulated sufficient merits to become a cakravartī king, he does not stop at it but proceeds towards Samyaksambodhi ... if one cakravāṭa is filled with water, weapons or embers and if he is told that only a person who has crossed it will be a Buddha, he will not show any surprise but think 'I will cross it and attain Buddhahood'. If he is told that only

a person who has suffered four asaṅkhyakalpalaksas in the hells will attain Buddhahood, he will develop the desire to do so saying 'I will undergo these sufferings and attain Buddhahood.'"¹

The following passages from the Pūjāvaliya reflect the current trend of religious aspirations during the thirteenth century.

"Buddhaputra, the incumbent of the Mayurapāda pariveṇa, has mastered the manner of preaching a discourse. After hearing a discourse from him, many beings strive after Bodhisattva pāramitās. Thera Buddhaputra enables those good beings who come to him to aspire to Buddhahood."²

"In this narrative discourse of the Pūjāvaliya the fourth story, namely the Bodhisambhārapūjākathā, should be well listened to. This enables people who listen to it to develop a desire for Buddhahood."³

"Summoning the minister named Devapatirāja who is pleased in the three gems, who even donated his wife and children and aspires to Buddhahood..."⁴

1. Kmv., p.129 ff.

2. Pjv., p.41.

3. Ibid., p.11.

4. Ibid., p.11.

The wish of the author of the Pūjāvaliya is also to attain supreme enlightenment as stated in the concluding Pali verses.

"May I attain supreme enlightenment and release all beings from bhavabandhana by preaching the peerless dharma ...

... By the merit of writing this may I be endowed with wisdom like that of Mahosadha, with wealth like that of Jotiseṭṭhi and with charity like that of Vessantara, until I reach Buddhahood."¹

In fact, the main purpose of composing the Pūjāvaliya was to encourage the king to strive for Buddhahood. The minister Devapatirāja makes a fervent request to the king in the following words.

"Lord, a wise noble king like you should not be indifferent to the aspiration of Buddhahood. You should soon aspire to be a Buddha".²

The minister Devapatirāja informs the author of the Pūjāvaliya that the king is reluctant to aspire to Buddhahood particularly because he could not give away his children in order to perform the dānapāramitā and invites him to do

1. Ibid., p.704

2. Ibid., p.11

the needful.

"Do preach a discourse connected with the Bodhi-sattva pāramitās."¹

Out of deep compassion for the king, Buddhaputra decides to compose the Pūjāvaliya in order to show that the aspiration to Buddhahood is the highest of all aspirations and there is no difficulty in perfecting the pāramitās.

"Although the king is engaged in rendering services to the people and the religion and utilizes his life wisely in listening to religious discourses, I shall compose an analysis on the Bodhisattvapāramitā in the form of a religious narration in order to illustrate the following aspects; that the Bodhisattvas suffer less and enjoy more in samsāra while ordinary beings enjoy less and suffer more; of all aspirations, aspiration to Buddhahood is the highest; the Bodhisattvas enjoy the process of perfecting pāramitās in samsāra."²

The main theme of the Pūjāvaliya seems to be the idea of Buddhahood.

1. Ibid., p.11.

2. Ibid., p.12.

"When the wise hear stories about the gravity of the pāramitās, they make an effort to understand the facts; become pleased with the gravity of the pāramitās and strive for Buddhahood. Less wise people with hīnavīrya lose vīrya for Buddhahood, just as a sharp Kihiri stick loses its sharpness when dropped on a stone."¹

The author of the Pūjāvaliya gives even very mundane reasons why one should aspire to Buddhahood.

"The people say, 'it is said that pāramitās are numerous. The heaps of flesh, blood, heads, eyes and intestines one has to donate in order to perfect pāramitās stand higher than the Brahma world. We cannot donate flesh, eyes, heads, wives and children to such an extent. Hence such Buddhahood, we cannot achieve.' Thus they lose vīrya. That is the jñāna-bhāva of the individuals.

But what is the actual truth?

The blood donated by those beings during the period the Buddha perfected the pāramitās alone, leaving aside their wanderings in samsāra at other times, is higher than that donated by the Buddha ...

1. Ibid., p.46.

heads ... eyes ... While the Buddha was donating blood with the aspiration to Buddhahood, those beings were just wandering in samsāra. The blood of those beings that was squeezed and drunk by the yakṣas and rākṣasas, the blood that was shed from their wounds and ulcers in several births is more than that donated by the Buddha. Thus the beings wander about in samsāra donating blood in other ways but do not donate any, with the intention of attaining Buddhahood. This is their own foolishness ... And also some beings think, 'the Buddha is hard-hearted. How can one cut off his own head, his own flesh, blood, eyes and give away his own wife and children?' If they think 'we cannot do such a thing', it is their foolishness. In this world, there is no one who values his head, eyes, flesh, blood, wife and children more than the Bodhisattvas ... What is the cause for this? Ordinary beings love these five objects with delusion (moha) not knowing that they are impermanent. The Bodhisattvas love these objects wisely since they are endowed with diamond-like wisdom ----- Also the amount of eyes, heads, flesh etc. donated by the Bodhisattvas in samsāra

is less than that donated by other beings. What is the cause for this? At present, we hardly hear that such and such a person donated his head, eyes, etc. with the intention of becoming a Buddha. But we often hear that thousands of heads were cut off in such and such a war; bodies of various people were eaten by crocodiles; the blood of various people was drunk by yakṣas and rākṣasas; the eyes of people were dug out despite their cries; wives and children of people were taken away by enemies. We should realize that people lose their heads, eyes etc. in some way or other while wandering in samsāra.

--- Some beings in this world develop a fear thinking ' a Buddha has to suffer a lot in samsāra'. That is also due to their foolishness. The Buddha did not undergo suffering due to the power of pāramitās.

--- The Bodhisattvas with abundance of vīrya undergo no suffering in samsāra ...

--- What are the reasons? Bodhisattvas enjoy thirteen kinds of comfort ... They never enter the eight fearful hells."¹

1. Ibid., pp.46.ff

The aspiration to Buddhahood was becoming specially popular among the authors of Sinhalese works. The author of the Sinhala Bodhivamsaya (1303-1333), a translation of the Pali Bodhivamsa aspired to Buddhahood as stated in the colophon.

"... May I attain samyaksambodhi, preach discourses constantly and release all beings from the bondage of samsāra. May I be able to dispel the sorrows of all beings and bring happiness to them during my wanderings in samsāra, just in the way the sun is able to dispel the darkness and illuminate the whole world..."¹

The same author in his Anāgatavamsaya² states that he will receive vivarana from Buddha Maitreya at first, and later from all the Buddhas who will be born after Maitreya; fulfill the daśapāramitās; attain Buddhahood and help all beings out of the samsārasāgara.

The author of the Saddharmālaṅkāraya (1398-1410) too aspired to Buddhahood.

"May I also become a supramundane Buddha (loveturābuddu); illuminate the ten thousand cakravāṭas with

1. Sinhala Bodhivamsaya, e.d. Kirtisiri Dhammaratana, Matara, 1911, p.200.

2. S.Anāgy., p.185.

the splendour of my body, scattering the cakravāṭas all over with showers of lotuses, turn the wheel of the dharma, establish twenty four asaṅkhyas together with nine crores and sixty lakhs of beings in the Paths and Fruits and enter myself the excessively peaceful city of nirvāṇa along with them."¹

The object of the composition of the Saddharma-ratnākaraya too was to attain Buddhahood. This author will receive his vivarana from the Buddha Maitreya, fulfill the Buddhakāraḍadharmas, attain Buddhahood and work for the benefit of others (parārthasiddhi) by distributing amṛta-mahānirvāṇa to the world.² Even the king to whom Saddharma-ratnākaraya was dedicated was expected to attain Buddhahood.

"... May the king by sharing this merit enjoy immense royal splendour while increasing the caturvidhadharmas, namely span of life, complexion, health and power in this birth; enjoy the happiness of heavenly and human life in the future and finally attain samyaksambodhi... You may contribute to the benefit of all by attaining to samyaksambodhi, jñāna

1. Sdlk., pp.86,87.

2. Srtnk., p.76.

comprising the sarvarasānvitanirvāṇa after maturing prajñā, vīrya and śraddhā.¹

The author of the Saddharmaratnākaraya emphatically says that everybody should aim at Buddhahood, and not mere nirvāṇa.

"All those who listen to this joy-causing composition should do so with intent mind and ears; observe the dharma as given there and engage themselves in work for others; be diligent in contributing to the welfare of others and try to attain amṛtamahā-nirvāṇa like the Buddhas including our Buddha who was born as Sumedha, who discarded nirvāṇa which he could attain at that very moment; equalled the sufferings of samsāra to the bliss of nirvāṇa; plunged into the samsāra; helped the people and got over the samsāra together with them."²

The same author gives instructions on the attainment of Buddhahood.

"Thus the Bodhisattvas perfecting the ten pāramitās do so having vīrya in the foremost place. Thus

1. Ibid., p.534.

2. Ibid., p.536.

prajñā and vīrya occupy the chief place in perfecting buddhakāraḍadharmas. All beings who aspire to Buddhahood should do so with prajñā and vīrya."¹

The Saddharmaratnākaraya has introduced a new connotation to the term nirvāṇa - not the one hitherto present in the Pali, Sinhalese or Sanskrit Buddhism. Although Buddhas, Pratyekabuddhas and Arhats are said to have attained one and the same nirvāṇa, the terms nirvāṇa, and amrtamahānirvāṇa are generally referred to in connection with Arhats in the Pali canonical and non-canonical literature. Buddhas are generally said to attain Samyaksambodhi and the Pratyekabuddhas, the Pratyekabodhi. The Saddharmaratnākaraya differentiates between the terms nirvāṇa and amrtamahānirvāṇa,² the former to mean the attainment of a mere Arhat and the latter, that of a Buddha. The term amrtamahā is a combination of the two words, amṛta meaning nirvāṇa³ and mahā, an adjective meaning great. The Sinhalese author seems to have used the term amrtamahānirvāṇa, in the sense of super-nirvāṇa to denote Buddhahood. It is noteworthy here that the general wish of

1. Ibid., p.164.

2. Sin. amāmahānivaṇ.

3. amṛta or amṛtapada (P. amatapada) denotes nirvāṇa.

See Dhammapada, p.4

Buddhists in present day Ceylon is tuntarā bodhiyen
ektarā bodhiyakata pämiṇa amāmaṇivan sāpa labamvā
 (May I reach one of the three bodhis and eventually
 attain the bliss of amṛtamahānirvāṇa). The term
amṛtamahānirvāṇa in this context, however, is more
 likely to mean nirvāṇa than Buddhahood.

From the foregoing may be concluded that the
 highest spiritual attainment of Buddhahood as reflected
 in the Pali canon was meant to be limited only to a
 selection of very few. This 'discrimination' was aban-
 doned as is emphasized in the Sinhalese writings of the
 tenth to thirteenth centuries and the attainment of
 Buddhahood became gradually 'democratized' and was held
 to be a possibility for ordinary human beings.

Chapter III

Trikāya, Vajrakāya, Śūnyatā, Karunā and
Prajñā, Pranidhāna and Vyākaraṇa.

There are some Mahāyāna concepts associated with the ideal of Buddhahood which have penetrated into Sinhalese Buddhist literature. The degree to which these concepts are represented in the extant Sinhalese works varies. So does the emphasis with which these ideas are treated. The paucity of the material constitutes however a serious handicap to the full treatment which these problems otherwise merit.

Trikāya

The doctrine of trikāya (doctrine of three bodies in the Mahāyāna represents a new theological interpretation of the Buddha. The Buddha was conceived to possess three kinds of bodies, i.e. nirmāṇakāya (the body of transformation), sambhogakāya (the body of bliss) and dharmakāya, (the body of the Law). We shall now try to examine the impact which the concept of trikāya made on Sinhalese Buddhism.

The Theravādins had a realistic conception of the

Buddha; to them the Buddha was a human being living in this world and subject to mortality. There was no transcendental element in him. Of course he was a superior human being. The Buddha was the originator of the Path, the knower of the Path which is followed by the disciples.¹ But there are passages in the Nikāyas that may have led to misinterpretation: for instance, the identification of the Law with the Buddha in a purely metaphorical sense, without any metaphysical implications.

Alam Vakkali kim te pūtikāyena ditthena. Yo
kho Vakkali dhammam passati so mam passati. Yo
mam passati so dhammam passati.²

(What is the use of seeing the body of impure matter? Vakkali! he who sees the dhamma sees me, he who sees me sees the dhamma.)

After the Buddha's passing away, the dhamma and vinaya were to be the 'Teacher'.

1. M, III.p.8.

2. S, III.p.120.

We learn from the Mahāvamsa that also the relics of the Buddha were looked upon as the Buddha himself. The thera Mahinda says to king Devānampiyatissa, "Cira dittho no mahārāja Sammāsambuddho. Mv., 17.2.

Yo vo Ānanda, mayā dhammo ca vinayo ca desito
paññatto so vo mam'accayena satthā.¹

A similar conversation takes place between Ānanda and Gopaka Moggallāna when the former explains why the monks after the Buddha's death are not without refuge. They have now refuge in dhamma and vinaya.²

The word dhammakāya did occur in the Nikāyas, though not in a metaphysical sense.

Brahmuno putto oraso mukhato jāto brahmajo,
brahmanimmīto, brahmadāyādo, bhagavato' mhi putto
oraso mukhato jāto dhammajo dhammanimmīto dhamma-
dāyādo iti. Tam kissa hetu, Tathāgatassa h'etam
adhivacanam. Dhammakāyo iti pi Brahmakāyo iti pi
Dhammabhūto iti pi.³

(Just as a Brahman would say that he was born of Brahmā from Brahmā's mouth, that he was created by Brahmā and was the heir of Brahmā, similarly a monk would say that he was born of Bhagavā from his mouth, that he was born of the dhamma, was created

1. D., II p.154. Miln., p.99.

2. M., Gopaka-Moggallāna Sutta (No.108)

3. D., III, Aggaññasuttanta, p.84; also S., II, p.221.

by the dhamma and was the heir of the dhamma. What is the reason for this? Dhammakāya, Brahmakāya and Dhammabhūta are the synonyms of Tathāgata.)

In his article 'Les trois Corps du Bouddha'¹ Masson-Oursel shows trace of the Mahāyānic kāya conception in the Āṅguttara Nikāya, where the Buddha tells Brahman Doṇa that the former was neither a deva, a gandhabba, a yakkha or a mortal since he had got rid of the āsavas.

" ... Devo na bhavaṃ bhavissatīti iti puṭṭho samāno na kho ahaṃ brāhmaṇa devo bhavissāmīti vadesi, gandhabbo no bhavaṃ bhavissatīti iti puṭṭho samāno na kho ahaṃ gandhabbo bhavissāmīti vadesi, yakkho ... vadesi, manusso no bhavaṃ bhavissatīti iti puṭṭho samāno na kho ahaṃ brāhmaṇa manusso bhavissāmīti vadesi, atha kho ko carahi bhavaṃ bhavissatīti?

... āsavānaṃ appahīnattā devo bhaveyyaṃ ...
gandhabbo bhaveyyaṃ yakkho bhaveyyaṃ manusso bhaveyyaṃ te me āsavā paṇā ... anuppādadhammā. Seyyathāpi bhikkhave uppalaṃ vā padumaṃ vā puṇḍarīkaṃ vā udake jātam udake samvaddham udakam accuggamma tḥāti anupalittam udakena,

1. JA 1913, pp.581ff.

evam eva kho brāhmaṇa loke jāto loke samvaddho
 lokam abhibhuyya viharāmi anupalitto lokena.
 Buddho ti maṃ brāhmaṇa dhārehīti...¹

(... When questioned as to whether yo will
 become a deva ... [a gandhabba ... a yakkha ...
 a human being], you reply: "No, Brahman, I will not
 become a deva ... a gandhabba ... a yakkha, I will
 not become a human being." What will you then become?
 ...

... Those āsavas whereby, if they were not
 abandoned, I should become a gandhabba, a yakkha, a
 human being,— those āsavas in me are abandoned ...
 and will not rise again. Just as, Brahman, a lotus,
 blue, red or white, though born in the water, grown
 up in the water, when it reaches the surface stands
 there unsoiled by the water, — just so, Brahman,
 though born in the world, grown up in the world,
 having overcome the world, I remain unsoiled by the
 world. Keep in mind that I am a Buddha, Brahman...)

The following passage from the Visuddhimagga illus-
 trates Buddhagosa's treatment of the kāya conception.

1. A., II, p.38.

"... Yo pi so Bhagavā asīti-anuvyañjanapaṭimaṇ-
 ditadvattiṃsa-mahāpurisalakkhaṇa - vicitra- rūpakāyo
 sabbākāraparīsuddhasīlakkhandhādi-guṇaratanasamiddha-
 dhammakāyo yasamahattapuññamahatta ... appaṭipuggalo
 araham sammāsambuddho..."¹

(... He, the Blessed One who has his body adorned
 with the thirty two major marks of a great man and
 the eighty minor marks, who has the body of the Law
 fulfilled with the jewels of the virtues, such as
 the groups of precepts pure in all respects, [who
 has reached the highest place] among the great in
 fame, great in merit, ... who is peerless, worthy,
 supreme Buddha ...)

Here the terms rūpakāya and dhammakāya have not been
 associated with any metaphysical connotations. However
 the fact that the Pali tradition laid down that the rūpa-
kāya of the Buddha was endowed with thirty two major
 marks and eighty minor marks goes to show that the Buddha,
 though represented as a human being did possess superhuman
 qualities. In fact, these marks of a great being were
 revealed at his birth. This and other miraculous incidents

1. Vm., p.234.

associated with his birth reflect the beginning of a process of deification of the person of the Buddha. This process, without doubt, seriously contributed towards the development of the trikāya conception of the Mahāyānists. The term dharmakāya in the Pali literature as we have observed denoted the Omniscience along with the various virtues of the Buddha and the body of religious teachings established by him; while the term rūpakāya represented the physical body of the Buddha endowed with thirty two major and minor marks.

Further, Buddhaghosa's tendency to attribute super-human powers to the Buddha is reflected in the Atthasālinī. During the three months the Buddha was in Tusita heaven preaching Abhidhamma to his mother, he created Buddhas after his own image who would preach the doctrine just in the same manner.

" ... Bhagavā dhammaṃ desento va manussaloke kalam oloketi. So bhikkhācāravelaṃ sallakkhetvā nimmitabuddham māpetvā 'Imassa cīvaragahaṇaṃ patta-gahaṇaṃ sarakutti ākappo ca evarūpo nāma hotu, ettakaṃ nāma dhammaṃ desetū ti' adhiṭṭhāya pattacīvaraṃ ādāya Anotattadahaṃ gacchati."¹

1. Atthasālinī, PTS, p.16.

(... The Blessed One even while preaching the doctrine looked at the time in the human world. He observed that it was the time for him to go for his begging rounds. So he created a Buddha after his own image and thus determined: 'Let this created Buddha hold the robe, the bowl, speak and assume his appearance in such and such a manner; let him preach so much of the doctrine.' Then the Buddha took his own bowl and robe and went to Anotatta Lake.)

The Mahāsāṅghikas gave a different interpretation to the rūpakāya of the Theravādins. They believed that the Buddha was lokottara (transcendental) and Śākyamuni was only a nirmānakāya (phantom) of the Buddha. It should be noted here that the Vaitulyakas of Ceylon conceived that the Buddha remained in the Tusita heaven and only sent a phantom of himself to the world (nimmitarūpamattakaṃ).¹ The idea of the nimmitarūpamattakaṃ in the Kathāvatthu commentary is very similar to the notion conveyed by the nirmānakāya of the Mahāsāṅghikas.

The Mahāyānists developed the doctrine of the trikāya

1. See p. 19.

by incorporating the nirmānakāya conception of the Mahāsāṅghikas and adding to it two other conceptions, namely that of the sambhogakāya and the dharmakāya. Sambhogakāya was similar to the transcendental Buddha conceived by the Mahāsāṅghikas. The dharmakāya concept was entirely the invention of the Mahāyānists which gave rise to a new philosophy.

According to the new interpretations and theories introduced by the trikāya doctrine of the Mahāyānists, Buddha Gautama was not really a man of flesh and blood but only a phantom created in order to lead the people on to the Path of Enlightenment. The nirmānakāya represents those human forms which the Buddhas assume to live a human life; they are subject to sickness, old age and death, like any other ordinary human. Thus nirmānakāya is the human hypostasis of the Absolute on earth. According to the Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra, it is the body assumed by the Buddhas to render service to beings towards their liberation by way of such means as learning of arts and crafts, attaining of nirvāṇa etc.

Śilpajanmamahābodhisadānirvāṇadarśanaiḥ

Buddhanirmānakāyo 'yam mahāmāyo vimocane.¹

1. Sūtrā., Vol. 1, p.45.

The sambhogakāya, the body of bliss is the idealised Buddha, by which the Absolute is known eternally. It was a kind of theophanic existence of the Buddha. According to the Śatasāhasrikā and the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā,² it is a refulgent body that emanates countless rays of light and illuminates the various lokadhātus. The sambhogakāya is generally assumed by the Buddhas for imparting the Mahāyāna Sūtras to the Bodhisattvas in the Gr̥dhrakūṭa, Sukhāvātī or in one of the heavens. For instance, Saddharmapundarikāsūtra was revealed by Buddha Śākyamuni in this blissful form.

Dharmakāya is the only real body of the Buddha, one permanent Reality, whose human expression is the nirmānakāya and whose eternal manifestation is the sambhogakāya.

"The dharmakāya which literally means 'body or system of being,' is, according to the Mahāyānists, the ultimate reality that underlies all particular phenomena; it is that which makes the existence of individuals possible; it is the raison d'être of the universe; it is the norm of being, which regulates

1. Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā, pp.8-29.

Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā, pp.6ff.

the course of events and thoughts. The conception of dharmakāya is peculiarly Mahāyānistic, for the Hīnayāna school did not go so far as to formulate the ultimate principle of the universe; its adherents stopped short at a positivistic interpretation of Buddhism. The dharmakāya remained for them to be the Body of the Law or the Buddha's personality as embodied in the truth taught by him."¹

We may now examine how these terms have been used in Sinhalese literature. The terms rūpakāya and dharmakāya referred to in Sinhalese works are generally used in a sense identical with that in the Pali sources.

The following quotations are from the Abhidharmārttha-saṅgrahasanneva, (1153-1186 A.D.) a glossary on the Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha of Anuruddha.

"... The body decked with the thirty two major marks which are pleasing to the eyes of the whole is known as the rūpakāyasampattiya ..."²

1. D.T.Suzuki, Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism, London, 1907, pp.45-46.

2. Abhss., p.5.

"The word sa-saddhammagāṇuttamaṃ denotes the praise of the dharmaratna and saṅgharatna, especially the dharmakāyasampattiya of the Buddha, parivārasampattiya and parahita-pratipattiya ..."¹

The dharmakāya of the Buddha is defined in the Dharmapradīpikāva as follows:

"The Buddha is possessed of the dharmakāya of endless and limitless virtues such as deśabala and catuvaiśārāḍya since he is Arhat and Samyaksambuddha and is possessed of vidyācaranagūṇa."²

There is a reference to dharmakāya in Saddharmaratnākaraya which gives the simple meaning of the doctrine of the Buddha.

"Is there anywhere a wise śramaṇa-brāhmaṇa or a saṅghaparināyaka or a gaṇācārya who knows the dharmakāya of the Buddha which is devoid of defilements?"³

References to the well developed Mahāyāna concept of trikāya are meagre in Ceylon literature. The earliest

1. Ibid., p.6.

2. Dharmapradīpikāva, p.28

3. Srtnk. p.167

known reference occurs in a Sanskrit inscription¹ of a fragmentary nature engraved on a rock near Ambasthala Dagäba at Mihintale. The inscription which is written in a script similar to the Pallava Grantha and attributed to the seventh or eighth century, appears to be a hymn in praise of trikāya in the Śragdharā metre.

Paranavitana has reconstructed the inscription with the help of two versions of a hymn called Trikāyastava which contains verses on trikāya- one was a version which Sylvain Lévi restored into Sanskrit from a Chinese transliteration, the other, a version published from a Tibetan codex by A.Von Staël-Holstein. The former version which is supposed to have been taken by an Indian monk to China in 973 A.D., consisting of four verses, three in praise of the kāyas and the fourth containing the wish of the author, seems to have been composed in Śragdharā metre like the Ceylon inscription. Bhiksurb-bodhisattvo guṇā-karah in the illegible portion of the Ceylon inscription is most probably a reference to the author of the inscription who may have been extolled at the end of the hymn. We quote here the translation of the reconstructed version:

1. EZ., IV, pp.242.

"[Verse 1] I worship that incomparable Dharm-makāya of the Buddha which though not one is also not many, which is the support of the great prosperity causing the welfare of one's own self as well as others; which is not being and is also not non-being; which, like the sky, is of equal disposition to all, is of inconceivable nature, is stainless, unchanging, auspicious; which is unequalled but is also equal, is all-pervading but above every possible determination, and is to be comprehended by each one for himself.

"[Verse 2] I here do worship that Sambhogakāya of the Buddhas which is transcendental and unthinkable; which causes to spread in the midst of assemblies, for the pleasure of those endowed with wisdom, the great superhuman power of their [i.e. the Buddhas] own, the result of hundreds of good deeds; which flows forth over the whole world and is of unceasing eloquent voice [proclaiming] the true doctrine, and which is the foundation of the great empire of righteousness.

"[Verse 3] I worship, by all sorts of means, that Nirmāṇakāya of the Buddhas which, for the purpose

of ripening [the intellect of] beings, sometimes shines radiant as the fire and which, sometimes again, as in the Enlightenment and in [the turning of] the Wheel of the Law, appears tranquil, which exists in diverse forms; which assuages the dread of the three forms of existence; which goes to the ten directions and is of great benefit [to beings]."¹

Curiously enough there occurs an elaborate discussion on a fourfold kāya system in the Saddharmaratnākaraya.² We shall quote here the description in full, in order to examine the extent to which the Sinhalese author has followed or adapted the Mahāyāna trikāya concept.

"... And also the Buddha is resplendent individually with a fourfold kāyasampatti, i.e. rūpakāya, dharmakāya, nimittakāya and śūnyakāya. Of the fourfold kāyasampatti, it is the rūpakāyasampatti that has been described as the four kinds of posture (explained in the text). Hence the rūpakāya-sampatti comes within the sphere of the physical eye because it can be seen by all the beings who possess physical

1. EZ., IV, pp.245.

2. Srtnk. pp.15ff.

eyes. In other words, rūpakāya-sampatti was shown as a favour to the ajñānasattvas who could not see the dharmakāya etc. with eyes of wisdom.

The threefold kāyasampatti consists of the dharmakāyasampatti that was shown to the prājñasattvas the nimittakāyasampatti that was shown to the āryasattvas and the śūnyakāyasampatti that was shown to the anāsravasattvas devoid of upadhi.

Of these three kinds of kāyasampatti, what is dharmakāya which comes within the sphere of wisdom?

The significance of dharmakāya should be known as follows:

It comes within the sphere of the eye of wisdom of the wise; it clears up the black mud-filled pool of the evil mind as if with a flow of pure water which has a water-clearing gem; it gives joy and pleasure by appearing in every mind that wishes for it and by being seen by every eye that looks; it dispels all disasters caused by yaksas, pretas, poison, rogues, disease, bondage, enemies, weapons, fire, water, precipices, snakes and thorns; it accomplishes the beneficial purpose (arthasiddhi) of both the worlds; it is honoured

by the wise men whose hearts are treasured by the dharmātmā, with thoughts filled with devotion and love [with verses in praise of Buddha; nine verses are cited here]; it is incorporated in the nine verses namely, Itipiso bhagavā araham sammāsam-
buddho etc.; it is beyond the sphere of the physical eye but comes within the wisdom eye, like a treasure of a collection of gems which is the multitude of endless and limitless kalyāṇaguṇa consisting of the pañcābhijñā, aṣṭasamāpatti and sivupilisiṃbiyā (four pratisambhidā).

What is nimittakāyasampatti? The nimittakāya-
sampatti has been known to uttamapuruṣas (noble beings), namely, the three kinds of sovān beings (srotāpatti) called ekabīja, kolaṅkola, sattakkhattuparama; the three kinds of sakrdāgāmin who have attained the fruits of kāma-bhava, rūpa-bhava and arūpa-bhava; six of the followers of each of the four paṭipadā, namely sovān, sakrdāgāmi, sukhāpaṭipadā, dandhābhijñā, which makes twenty four; antarāparinibbāyī, upahaccaparinibbāyī saṅkhārāparinibbāyī, asaṅkhārāparinibbāyī uddham-
sota-akanitthagāmi; five of each of the four brahma-
lokas called aviha, atappa, sudassa, sudassi which

makes twenty; the twenty anāgāmi āryapuruṣas in
 the akanitṭhabrahmaloka including the four except
 the uddhamsota; fifty āryapuruṣas including the two
 arhats, śuṣkavidarśaka and samathayānika, the 54
 who have reached the caturāryamārga, sovān, sakrdāgāmi,
anāgāmi or arhat, which when subdivided into śraddhā-
dhura and prajñādhura makes 108. It comes within the
 sphere of the divine eye; it reigns over the kingdom
 of Buddhahood enjoying the samāpatti like royal splen-
 dour, being bedecked with clusters of flags of the
 four parisuddhaśīlas; abhiññā like stretches of white
 sand; 15 caranadharmas like lines of gem-studded arches,
 four rddhipādas like four wish-conferring trees, four
brahmavihāras like lotus ponds, four satipatṭhānas
 like great walls, four noble truths like four palace
 entrances that cannot be entered by the keles (defile-
 ments) like enemies, seven bodhyaṅgas like rows of
 stalls, sevenfold āryadhana like store houses of jewels;
 it has come to the lokottaramārga like a palace; it
 takes the deśanā like a sword with the sopādiśeṣanir-
vānadhātu like a hand, and conquers defilements
 by oppressing the vineyajana like enemies sup-
 pressing servants; releases them from the trṣṇā-like

bondage, surrounded by vineyajana as by a great retinue, hoisting vimukti like white parasols, keeping in the highest position maitrī and karuṇā like two young ladies, wearing arhatphala like gem-studded crowns, drinking the dhyānasuva like victory, distributing the doctrine like gems among the disciples as if among servants; it is the sopādiśeṣanirvāṇadhātu which is beneficial to all beings and does not come within the sphere of the physical eye.

What is śūnyakāyasampatti? Śūnyakāyasampatti of the Buddha should be known as follows:

Being confused in ignorance like darkness; entering the bhava like a vast forest, possessed of birth, decay, and death like demons; being caught by keles (defilements) as it were by enemies; entering the craving like bondage; undergoing disasters for a number of aeons; getting released with the help of kuśala as if by powerful hands; getting on to the mārgaphala as to a palace road with the help of prajñā like light; going out of the sopādiśeṣanirvāṇadhātu like palace into the nirupādiśeṣanirvāṇadhātu like fearless city; it is devoid of all qualities such

as colour, size, and form, it is non-decaying and immortal; it does not come within the sphere of all eyes; it could be specially known by all those who have attained nirvāṇa through anupādiśeṣanirvāṇadhātu; it is like a perfume of nectar which is spread all over from a very colourful flower full of long and broad petals, pollen and stalk; it pervades all the world without showing a single colour red, white, blue, black, dark(grey) gold, pale (white) or variegated; it does not associate with a place, such as far, near, immediate, above, earth or space; it does not have a specific distinction such as clever, grown, or invisible beyond this place; it is innumerable, without a number such as one, two, ten, a hundred, a thousand or a crore; it is formless, being devoid of forms such as tiny, big, round, rectangular, square, long, short, high and low; it is beyond comparison and thought; it is nirvāṇa, composed of anupādiśeṣanirvāṇadhātu devoid of craving, decay and death.

Thus, with his peerless beauty giving comfort and pleasure to the eyes of whoever saw him, the ears of whoever heard him, the minds of whoever felt him, he is endowed with the fourfold kāyasampatti, namely

rūpa, dharma, nimitta, śūnya, which is pleasing to all ajñānasattva, prājñasattva, āryasattva and the anāsravasattva respectively."

In the opinion of some modern scholars, the trikāya concept of the Mahāyāna is incorporated in the fourfold kāya system in the Saddharmaratnākaraya quoted above. Nandasena Mudiyanse¹ states that the rūpakāya is identical with the Mahāyāna nirmānakāya while the nimittakāya and the śūnyakāya according to him are an "elaboration" of the sambhogakāya. Moraṭuve Sāsanaratana is of the opinion that the description of the kāyas in the Saddharmaratnākaraya appears as if it were a commentary on the Mahāyāna concept of trikāya as described in the Ceylon Sanskrit inscription cited above.² Elsewhere³ he states that the description of śūnyakāya in the Saddharmaratnākaraya is identical with the interpretation of śūnyatā by Nāgārjuna.

On the contrary, we would like to point out that the four kāyas or the three kāyas as they appear in the Sinhalese work offer no parallel to the kāya conception of the Mahāyāna. The manner of presentation of the kāya

1. MMC., p.23.

2. Lakdiva Mahāyāna adahas, Colombo, 1952, p.396.

3. Bauddha darśana saṅgrahaya, Colombo, 1954, p.159.

system in the Sinhalese works demonstrates an advanced stage of 'institutionalization' and elaboration of the same old theory of rūpakāya and dharmakāya known from the Theravāda. Two kinds of classification can be found in the Sinhalese text: a three-fold and a four-fold one.

The fourfold kāya consists of the rūpakāya, dharmakāya, nimittakāya and śūnyakāya. The threefold classification consists of those just mentioned except for the rūpakāya which is destined for the ajñānasattva.

It is not unlikely that the formulation of a three-fold kāya was influenced by the term trikāya used by Mahāyāna rather than by the trikāya idea underlying the Mahāyāna concept with its ontological and metaphysical significance.

We may now consider each of the kāya concepts in the Sinhalese work. The rūpakāya and the dharmakāya are merely an elaboration of the two concepts of rūpakāya and dharmakāya in the Pali works. Nimittakāya and śūnyakāya are terms entirely unknown to the Pali tradition or even to the Mahāyāna. Nimittakāya in Pali in this context may be rendered as 'empirical body' in contrast with

śūnyakāya, 'body devoid of empirical content'. Although the term śūnya, was often used by the Mahāyānists in connection with the dharmakāya, no kind of kāya conception existed in the Mahāyāna by the name of śūnyakāya. By the use of the term nimittakāya, the Sinhalese author intended to present nirvāṇa as sopādiśesaṇirvāṇadhātu, i.e. the nirvāṇa in which aggregates of empirical defilements still persist. On the other hand, when using the term śūnyakāya he intended to present the nirvāṇa in which the extinction of aggregates of empirical defilements has taken place. By the process of this extinction, the kāya has freed itself of the aggregates and became void of them, i.e. it became śūnya.

The Pali as well as the Mahāyāna tradition agree in full with the two kinds of nirvāṇadhātus.

The Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā defines the two nirvāṇadhātus as;

"arahattapattito paṭṭhāya kilesavaṭṭassa khepittattā sa-upādisesena, carimacittanirodhena khandhavaṭṭassa khepittattā anupādisesena ca ti dvīhi pi parinibbāṇehi parinibbutā nāma, anupādāno viya paḍīpo apanṇattikabhavaṃ gatā ti attho."¹

1. DhapA., Vol.II, p.163.

A similar definition is found in the Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi.

"Tasmiṃś cāpanīte na punas tenāśrayeṇa kleśānām utpattir iti sopadhiśeṣo nirvāṇadhātuḥ prāpyate. Pūrvakarmāt kṣiptaśanmanirodhe ca tato 'nyajanmāpratīsandhānān nirupadhiśeṣo nirvāṇadhātuḥ."¹

It seems therefore that the adoption of the various kāyas and particularly of the śūnyakaya in Sinhalese was inspired by the linguistic implications of the nomenclature of the kāyas rather than by the philosophical import which the Mahāyāna attributed to its kāya philosophy.

Vajrakāya

There is reference to vajrakāya in the Sinhalese work Dhampiyā Atuvā Gāṭapadaya, a glossary to the Pali Dhammapadatṭhakathā compiled by king Kassapa V (913-923 A.D.). The word vajrakāya appears in the explanatory note given by the Sinhalese author on the Pali phrase, rudhiruppādāna-kammaṃ katvā quoted from the Devadattatheravattu in the Dhammapadatṭhakathā where the evil actions

1. Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi, ed. Sylvain Lévi, Paris 1925, p.38

of the Devadatta against the Buddha are related. The following is a translation of the relevant passage:

"rudhiruppadana-kammaṃ katvā - having committed an act of shedding blood. This means, that a piece which split from the stone he threw came upon the Buddha and shook the blood in his body. Since the Buddha has a vajrakāya, even if a stone strikes him, blood would not be shed. How can Jīvaka's weapon cause damage to vajrakāya? The state of having vajrakāya is such that it will not be damaged by any device employed by others. Jīvaka's attack by weapon is a device employed by others. It cannot damage the vajrakāyatā. If so then, why did his blood shake after the Thera threw the stone (at him)? Just in the way glass does not break when kept in the sun, but gets heated up, it (the body) does not break by devices but just a shaking of the inside takes place."¹

Vajrakāya was a Tāntric by-product of the concept of the dharmakāya on which it was superimposed. Several

1. DAG., p.50

schools place above the representation of the Buddha as a dharmakāya a specific transcendental Buddha who is the personification of the absolute and unique reality. He is then called Mahāvairocana Vajradhara, Vajrasattva, Ādibuddha, Bhagavat or Īśvara. In this context, a special body is frequently attributed to him which stands above the dharmakāya and is called, among others, the vajrakāya. In this body, the Buddha enjoys the bliss of the fundamental unity which is symbolically identified with his śakti.¹

Tantrayāna works like Pañcakrama, describe kāyavajrasvabhāva, vāgvajrasvabhāva, cittavajrasvabhāva as attributes of the Buddha and prescribe to the devotees various means of acquiring them:

Yat kāyaṃ sarvabuddhānāṃ pañcaskandhaprapūritam

Buddhakāyasvabhāvena mamāpi tādrśaṃ bhavet

Om sarvatathāgatakāyavajrasvabhāvātmako 'ham

.. .. .

Yad eva vajradharmasya vācā niruktisampadā

Mamāpi tādrśī vācā bhaved dharmadharopamā

Om sarvatathāgatavāgvajrasvabhāvātmako 'ham

1. André Bareau, Der Indische Buddhismus Die Religionen Indiens, Stuttgart, 1964, III, p.183.

.. .. .

Yac cittam samantabhadrasya guhyakendrasya dhimatah

Mamāpi tādrśam cittam bhaved vajradharopamam

Om sarvatathāgatacittavajrasvabhāvātmake 'ham.¹

Śūnyatā.

The term śūnya (P. suñña) is not absent in Pali texts though it is not used in the Mahāyāna sense. The Paṭisambhidāmagga contains a chapter devoted to the exposition of suñña. It declares that the world is void of individuality or anything belonging to an individuality.

Yasmā ca suññaṃ attena vā attaniyena vā tasmā suñño
loko ti vuccatī ti²

Void appears also in another context in the Pali literature. Suññata (void) animitta (groundless) and appaṇihita (without fixed purpose) are three kinds of samādhi.³

The germ of the Mahāyāna conception of śūnyatā, however, could be noticed in such passages as the following:

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1. L. de la Vallée Poussin, Études et textes Tāntriques
Pañcakrama, Louvain, 1896, pp.5f.
 2. Paṭisambhidāmagga, II p.177.
 3. A., I, p.299, Mil., p.337.

"Avyākatam mayā tam jīvaṃ tam sarīram. Hoti tathāgato param maraṇa na hoti tathāgato param maraṇa hoti ca no hoti ca tathāgato param maraṇā n'eva hoti na na hoti tathāgato param maraṇā."¹

Already in the Pali canon, nibbāna was associated with the term suñña. In the Arahantavagga of the Dhammapada, an Arahant is one who has perceived the void and the unconditioned freedom, namely nibbāna.

Yesam sannicayo n'atthi ye pariññātabhojanā
Suññato animitto ca vimokkho yesam gocaro
Ākāse va sakuntānam gati tesam durannayā²

Nevertheless the term suñña was not used in the Mahāyānic sense in the Pali canon or post-canonical literature.

However, Nāgārjuna may have based his concept of śūnyatā on passages like the following in the Majjhima Nikāya.

"Depending on the oil and the wick does the light of the lamp burn; it is neither in the one nor in the other, nor anything in itself; phenomena are, likewise, nothing in themselves. All things are unreal; they are deceptions; Nibbāna is the only truth."³

1. D., I, p.188.

2. Dhammapada, Arahantavagga, v.92.

3. M., III, p.245, Dialogues of the Buddha, Vol., p.140.

According to Nāgārjuna's interpretation of this passage, those phenomena which the Majjhima Nikāya described as unreal and deceptive are in so far as Buddha was concerned nothing but śūnyatā.

"Tan mpsā mosadharma yaḍ yadi kim tatra mpsyate
Etat tūktam bhagavatā śūnyatāparidīpakam."¹

In his introduction to Candrakīrti's Prasannapadā Stcherbatsky says;

"The term śūnya is in Mahāyāna a synonym of dependent existence (pratītya-samutpāda) and means not something void, but something 'devoid' of independent reality (svabhāva-śūnya), with the implication that nothing short of the whole possesses independent reality, and with the further implication that the whole forbids every formulation by concept or speech (niṣprapañca), since they can only bifurcate (vikalpa) reality and never directly seize it - this is attested by an overwhelming mass of evidence in all the Mahāyāna literature."²

The Mahāyāna concept of śūnyatā has found expression in the Sinhalese Viśuddhimārga Sanne compiled by King Parākramabāhu II. This is a Sinhalese translation, with detailed comments, of the Pali Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa.

1. Madhyamakavṛtti, ed. L. de la Vallée Poussin, St. Petersburg, 1913, XIII, pp.238f.
2. Th. Stcherbatsky, The conception of Buddhist nirvāṇa, Leningrad, 1927, p.43.

In the section dealing with subjects for meditation (kammatthānagahana), the Sinhalese author's explanation given on the Pali term gulhaṃ ganthaṃ is as follows¹.

Karmasthānasatyapratītyasamutpādādivū gāṃburu
śūnyatāpratisamyukta dharmayan.

(Elements connected with the profound śūnyatā, such as subjects of meditation, truths and interdependent origination.)

The above reference presents a marked resemblance to Nāgārjuna's exposition of śūnyatā. The explanation of the term gulhaṃ ganthaṃ suggests that the author of the Viśuddhimārgasannaya associated 'secret texts' with Mahāyāna ideas. In other words, the term gulhaṃ ganthaṃ brought to the mind of the author works dealing with profound doctrines such as śūnyatā with which he was acquainted. (The author quotes extensively from Buddhist Sanskrit works.).

Nāgārjuna has discussed in his Madhyamaka Vṛtti, the relation of āryasatyas and the pratītyasamutpāda to śūnyatā and established that they are indispensable for the realization of the truth, i.e. śūnyatā.

1. Viśuddhimārgasannaya, Vol.I, pp.414.

Yah pratītyasamutpādam paśyatīdam sa paśyati
Duhkham samudayam caiva nirodham mārgam eva ca¹

He even identifies pratītyasamutpāda with śūnyatā.

Yah pratītyasamutpādah śūnyatām tām pracakṣmahe²

1. Madhyamakavṛtti, XXIV, p.515.

2. Ibid., p.503.

Karunā and prajñā

Karunā (compassion) and prajñā, Pali paññā (wisdom) were well known concepts in early Buddhism although they did not have the significance and implications acquired by the two concepts in the Mahāyāna and later in the Tantra.

Apart from the use of the term paññā in Pali to mean intellect, wisdom, knowledge etc., its use became more prominent and frequent in the Pali canon, commentaries and later Pali literature as a technical term to denote the highest stage in religious practices which led to Arahantship, the three stages being sīlakkhandha, samādhikkhandha, paññā-kkhandha. In fact, the Visuddhimagga, the crest gem of the Pali commentaries, is an exposition on the entire Buddhist doctrine as classified into sīla, samādhi, and paññā. Paññā is even better known as one of the ten pāramitās.

Karunā which means compassion or kindness is one of the four brahmavihāras, namely, mettā (love), karuṇā, muditā (joy) upekkhā, (indifference) and these are included in the 40 kammatthānas.¹ Karunā was a form of meditation

1. Vm., p.110

through which one could develop extreme compassion towards beings even while seeking one's own salvation.

The Mahāyānists viewed the concept of karuṇā from a new perspective in that they believed that a Bodhisattva's attainment of ultimate enlightenment is not complete unless he sees that the rest of the beings cross over the ocean of samsāra and that unselfish service to the beings is done by his power of skilfulness and his heart of compassion.¹

The Mahāyānists laid great emphasis on karuṇā and considered it to be the dominant theme in all Bodhisattva practices.

The Śikṣāsamuccaya reads;

Yat kiñcid bhagavan Bodhisattvānām kāyakarma yat kiñcit vākkarma yat kiñcit manaskarma tat sarvaṃ sattvāveksitam pravartate mahākaruṇādhīpateyam.²

Mahākaruṇayā bhagavan bodhisattvānām sarvabuddha-dharmāḥ karatalagatā bhavanti.³

1. Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-śāstra of Nāgārjuna, tr. by Kumārajīva, T. 1509, Vol.25, 187c, 272a, 3146, 4176.

2. Śikṣā., p.117.

3. Ibid., p.286.

Prajñā and karuṇā are often mentioned together as the complementary ingredients required for the fulfilment of the Bodhisattva practices. Nāgārjuna has given his explanation of the concepts of prajñā and karuṇā in the following manner.

"Wisdom and compassion are different phases of the one principle, prajñā, the principle of comprehension; they constitute the twofold way in which the sense of the unconditioned functions in the wise. While the one constitutes insight, knowledge, understanding, the other constitutes feeling, emotion, action ... The way of knowledge consists in analysis and criticism, laying bare the distinct and unique natures of things and comprehending their mundane as well as their ultimate truth ... The way of compassion consists in effectively widening one's sense of one's kinship, essential bound-up-ness, with all that exists; and this is done through feeling, emotion, work, service."¹

The most common criticism levelled against the mode

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1. Nāgārjuna's philosophy as presented in the Mahā-prajñā-pāramitāśāstra by K. Venkata Ramanan,, Tokyo, 1966, pp.277f.

of enlightenment conceived in the Hīnayāna is that it lacked wisdom, compassion and skilfulness.¹ Its followers are only keen about their own salvation.² Also, the Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-śāstra alleges that the Sarvāstivādins do not properly comprehend or adequately appreciate the nature and value of the path of the Bodhisattva or of ideal of Buddhahood; they fall short of true wisdom and compassion.³

The important place occupied by prajñā and karuṇā in the Mahāyāna is reflected in the fact that the Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-śāstra names them as essential constituents of the Buddha's dharmabody.⁴ Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-śāstra has also attempted to prove that compassion is not a defiled element as one may think. The Buddhas have the ability to keep free from clinging to individuality and yet help all in the spirit of great compassion.⁵ Great compassion is the root of the way of the Buddha.⁶

1. Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-śāstra of Nāgārjuna, tr. Kumārajīva, 267c.

2. Ibid., 856-86a, 487a.

3. Jñānaprasthāna and its commentary Abhidharmamahā-vibhāsa-śāstra, T.1545, 893 ff.

4. Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā-śāstra. 245c.

5. Ibid., 257b.

6. Ibid., 256c.

The concept of prajñā and karuṇā found further development in the Tantras. D.L. Snellgrove discusses the significance attached to prajñā and karuṇā in the Hevajratantra.¹

"While the sphere of knowledge seems to be nirvāṇa, the sphere of effort exists in samsāra. The motive force of the one is wisdom (prajñā) and of the other compassion (karuṇā). Hence of all the perfections (pāramitā) of a bodhisattva, those of wisdom and self-sacrifice (dāna) are the two most extolled. Now among these perfections, there is one of skill in means (upāyakauśalya), referring to those means by which a bodhisattva should exercise his compassion. In the total list of perfections, where it appears as the seventh, it receives no special significance. In the Tantras, however, the perfections generally belong to an inferior practice that has been transcended, but two of them remain, endowed now with a deepened significance. One of them is Wisdom which is identified explicitly with nirvāṇa and the other is Means (or compassion) which

1. The Hevajra Tantra, A critical study, Introduction, London, 1959, London Oriental Series, Vol.6, p.23.

is identified with samsāra. To call anything the essence of Wisdom and Means, as the Hevajra-tantra is called on its first page, is to claim for it the nature of supreme truth, and to resolve Hevajra's name into two parts, HE meaning compassion, and VAJRA meaning wisdom, is to identify him with supreme beings."

The joint concept of prajñā and karuṇā as conceived in the Mahāyāna and later in the Tantrayāna seems to have found its way into Sinhalese works. In spite of the appearance of certain haphazardness in the application of the significance and function of prajñā and karuṇā, the classification as given below shows a considerable degree of importance attached to each of the two concepts as well as their joint operation.

The Karmavibhāga reads:

"... perfecting Buddhahood by prajñā; perfecting buddhakāraḥkarmas by karuṇā; dispelling the calamities of samsāra by prajñā; helping others by karuṇā; seeing others' sorrows by karuṇā; developing a disgust for sorrow by prajñā; receiving sorrow by karuṇā; nearing nirvāṇa by prajñā; not reaching nirvāṇa by karuṇā; nearing samsāra by karuṇā; not taking a liking to it by prajñā; developing passionlessness by prajñā not reaching passionlessness by karuṇā; going beyond the concept of 'mine' by prajñā; going beyond laziness and dependence by karuṇā; helping oneself

by prajñā; helping others by karuṇā; reaching dhīra-
bhāva by prajñā; reaching vīrabhāva by karuṇā; refrain-
 ing from inflicting pain on oneself by prajñā; ref-
 raining from inflicting pain on others by karuṇā;
 assessing one's own benefit by prajñā; assessing the
 benefit of others by karuṇā; reaching the state of
 non-fear by prajñā; causing no fear to others by
karuṇā; becoming dharmādhīpati by prajñā; becoming
lokādhīpati by karuṇā; dispelling aññā by prajñā;
 dispelling trṣṇā by karuṇā; acquiring vidyāsāmpat by
prajñā; acquiring carāṇasāmpat by karuṇā..."¹

After a discussion on the attainment of pāramitās,
 the Anāgatavamsaya elaborates upon the concept of karuṇā
 and prajñā.

"Buddhahood is attained by prajñā; buddhakāra-
dharmā is reached by karuṇā; one crosses over the
samsāra by prajñā; leads others across by karuṇā;
 grasps thoroughly other's sorrows by prajñā; begins
 to remedy others' sorrows by karuṇā; develops a
 disgust towards sorrow by prajñā; accepts sorrow by
karuṇā; steps forwards to nirvāṇa by prajñā; does
 not reach nirvāṇa by karuṇā; steps forward to samsāra

1. Kmv., p.135.

by karuṇā; does not get attached to samsāra by prajñā; gets detached from everywhere by prajñā; since prajñā is a kind of wisdom that is accompanied by karuṇā, it is not devoid of anugraha (favour) for others; one shows sympathy to all beings by karuṇā; since prajñā is a kind of wisdom that is accompanied by karuṇā, it is not devoid of attachment to others; the concept of 'I' and 'mine' does not occur by prajñā; laziness and dependence disappear by karuṇā; supremacy over one's own self is reached by prajñā; service for others is rendered by karuṇā; dhairya is produced by prajñā; vīrya is produced by karuṇā; one's own self is made free from pain by prajñā; others are made free from pain by karuṇā; service for one's own self is rendered by prajñā; service for others is rendered by karuṇā; fearlessness is produced by prajñā; non-attachment to samsāra is produced by karuṇā; supremacy over dharma is produced by prajñā; supremacy over the world is produced by karuṇā; a sense of gratefulness is produced by prajñā; a sense of previous help is produced by karuṇā; moha is destroyed by prajñā; trṣṇā is destroyed by karuṇā; kinds of vidyā such

as vidarśanañāna are produced by prajñā; kinds of carana such as prātimokṣasaṃvaraśīla are produced by karuṇā; ten kinds of bala including śraddhā are attained by prajñā; perfect skill in accomplishment of things with an element of danger is brought about by karuṇā; being the upāya (means) to the attainment of all pāramitās, karuṇā and prajñā are the pratyaya (cause) of all pāramitās. Karuṇā and prajñā are the pratyaya of the ten pāramitās such as dāna and śīla and of course of the mūlaprārthanā (central aspiration), namely 'May I become a Buddha...' ¹

"... All pāramitās consist of karuṇā and prajñā. All bodhisambhāradharmas are realized through karuṇā and prajñā. Virtues such as dāna consisting of karuṇā and prajñā are known as bodhisambhāradharmas, which culminate in the realization of Buddhahood. Ātmasnehaya (love for self) is entirely destroyed in a Mahābodhisattva on comprehension of the yathāsvabhāvaya (reality) due to non-attachment to things. A Mahābodhisattva develops a karuṇāsnehaya (compassion and love) for all beings as if for his own dear sons... Mahābodhisattvas are endowed with mahākaruṇā, mahāprajñā and

1. S. Anagv., p.26.

the fourfold virtues of dāna, priyavacana, arthacaryā, and samānātmata..."¹

These quotations serve as another example of the use of Mahāyāna terms without according them the profound meanings which some of the Mahāyāna texts in similar contexts have.

Pranidhāna and Vyākaraṇa.

A future Buddha begins his Bodhisattva career by making a vow or resolution for Buddhahood (pranidhāna)² in the presence of a Buddha, who then makes the prediction (vyākaraṇa or vyākṛti)³ that the vow will be fulfilled in the future.

Kern⁴ has shown three periods in the career of a Bodhisattva, according to the Pali tradition, namely,

1. S.Anagv., p.55.

2. Also abhinīhāra and prārthanā; P. paṇidhi or paṇidhāna, abhinīhāra and patthanā,. The more common term is paṇidhi. In. Sin. all the Sk. terms are used. The more common is prārthanā or the pure Sin. equivalent pātuma or pātīma. Gombrich has shown that the word varama is also used. See Precept and Practice, Oxford, 1971.

3. P.vyākaraṇa, veyyākaraṇa Sin. vivarana, A.Kunst translates it as 'undertaking', See BSOAS, XXXII, 3, p.628.

4. H. Kern, Man. Ind. Bud., p.65.

resolution, (abhinīhāra) prediction, (vyākaraṇa) and tumultuous acclamation (halāhala) at the approach of the last birth of a Bodhisatta.

According to Mahāyāna, the career of a Bodhisattva is normally classified as cittotpāda (production of thought), pranidhāna, vyākaraṇa and caryā (conduct).¹ Here we notice that the 'thought' that occurred in the mind of the candidate for Buddhahood before he pronounced his resolution has been taken in a technical sense and treated as a separate concept as cittotpāda unlike in the Pali tradition. It is this stage of the career of the Bodhisattva, namely the cittotpāda, which gained special significance in the Mahāyāna in the name of bodhicitta, when the Bodhisattva idea was developed into a fully fledged doctrine. Bodhicitta is the thought of Enlightenment that is produced in a Bodhisattva for his own good and for the welfare and liberation of all living beings.

The bodhicitta was discussed in many Mahāyāna works.²

1. Har Dayal, op.cit., pp.58ff.

2. See for instance, Gaṇḍavyūha, ed. Suzuki & Idzumi, Kyoto, 1934-36, 494.1; Śikṣāsamuccaya, 5.20ff; Mahāvīyutpatti, 2351,

In the Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva (seventh century A.D.)

"Bhavaduḥkhaśatāni tartukāmair

Api sattvavyasanāni hartukāmaiḥ

Bahusaukhyāśatāni bhoktukāmair

Na vimocyam hi sadaiva bodhicittam."¹

(Never is the thought of Enlightenment to be relinquished by those who are desirous of escaping the hundreds of sorrows of existence, by those who are desirous of assuming the suffering of beings, or by those who are desirous of enjoying many hundreds of pleasures.)²

In connection with the stages of a career of Bodhisattva, a deviation from the Pali tradition can be traced in some Sinhalese works.³ Here the Bodhisattva's career consists of three stages- manopranidhāna (mental resolution), vākpranidhāna (verbal resolution) and vyākaraṇa. A division of pranidhāna into two categories of mano and vāk does not appear anywhere in the Pali canon or

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1. Bodhicaryāvatāra, ed. Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, Bib.Ind., Calcutta, 1960, p.3.
 2. The path of Enlightenment, the Bodhicaryāvatāra, tr. Marion L. Matics, London, 1970, p.144.
 3. Sdlk., Chap.2 & 3; Srtmk., Chap.2; Saddharmāvavāda-saṅgrahaya Chap.2.

in the commentaries. A shadow of the mano-praṇidhāna does occur in the following verse of the Buddhāpadāna section of the Apadāna.

Tena kammaṇa sukatena cetanāpanidhihi ca
jāhitvā mānusaṃ dehaṃ Tāvatisaṃ agaṇṇaṃ ahaṃ¹

However it should be noted that the term cetanā-panidhi was not used here in the technical sense of the word namely in the sense used in the Sinhalese works for the stage that preceded vākpraṇidhi.

The existence of two separate categories of praṇidhāna i.e. manopraṇidhāna and vākpraṇidhāna in Sinhalese would rather suggest that the Sinhalese borrowed the concept of mano-vākpraṇidhāna not from the Pali tradition but from another one. Manopraṇidhāna as a technical term, it should be mentioned bears affinity to the Mahāyāna concept of Bodhicitta.

In the Pali canon as well as in the commentaries, the panidhāna of Gotama begins with Buddha Dīpaṅkara's time when Gotama was born as Sumedha and expressed his resolution for attaining Buddhahood and received prediction from Dīpaṅkara. Thereafter, he made the resolution

1. The Apadāna, ed. Mary E. Lilley, PTS., London, 1925, pt.I, p.4.

in the presence of the twenty three Buddhas that followed Buddha Dīpaṅkara and received prediction from them. This is narrated in the Buddhavaṃsa¹ and the Nidānakathā,² the introduction to the Pali Jātaka collection.

As an apt illustration of the adoption of the mano-vākpranidhāna we find a number of stories corroborating the absorption of the mano-vāk concept in the Sinhalese Buddhist texts. The stories begin with an introductory narrative as to how a certain Brahma noticed that the numbers in Brahma worlds were diminishing because many ages had elapsed without the appearance of a Buddha. He looked out to see where the next future Buddha existed.

"He thought, 'Is there any courageous person who will be capable of fulfilling the principles which lead to Buddhahood?' He beheld with joy many thousands of Bodhisattvas who were perfecting pāramitās with the aspiration for Buddhahood, like

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1. Buddhavaṃsa., ed. R.Morris, PTS., London, 1882.
 2. The Jātaka, ed. V.Fausbøll, London, 1877, pp.1ff;
Buddhist birth stories or Jātaka tales, tr.T.W.Rhys Davids, London, 1880, pp.2ff.

lotus buds awaiting the rays of the sun so that they may open up. Looking around again with the idea of encouraging them on the Bodhisattva career, he discovered the Bodhisattva Gautama ... who was altruistic ... and inspired him (literally entered the Bodhisattava's mind) to make the resolution for Buddhahood in the following manner."¹

Then follow the stories of six former births of Gautama which will be sketched here in brief. (I presume that this will help in making out and discussing parallels in other traditions and in general in looking out for the original sources.)

The first is the story of the Bodhisattva who practised the virtue of looking after his mother (mātu-posaka-dharma). In search of wealth he set out to the land of gold with his mother in a ship in which a band of merchants were going for trading. On the seventh day when the ship was shattered by a gale, the Bodhisattva, regardless of his own life swam towards the shore carrying his mother on his back amidst the sharks, crocodiles and other dangerous water animals. At this moment, the

1. Sālk., pp.40ff.

aforementioned Brahma while surveying the world with the intention of encouraging beings to take to bodhi-sattvacaryā, saw the Bodhisattva's action and was convinced of the latter's attainment of Buddhahood in the future. He 'entered the Bodhisattva's mind' and caused him to concentrate his thoughts so that he should aspire to Buddhahood. Thus being inspired by Brahma, the Bodhisattva resolved mentally (sitinma prārthanā koṭa) to attain Buddhahood. In due course he died and was born in a heaven.

After his stay in the heaven, he was born as the son of king Brahmadata in Benares, which was known as Sirimatī at the time. Later he became king by the name of Śatrutāpa. The king who was well known for his elephant sport once captured a very beautiful elephant, tamed him and kept him as the royal elephant. Soon after this incident, a herd of wild elephants broke into the royal park and destroyed many trees. The king mounted his recently acquired elephant and went looking round in the park, when the elephant scented the female elephants and went after them carrying the king far away into the forest. The king at last seized the bending branches of a tree and escaped from the elephant's back.

Due to a magic spell by the chief elephant keeper, the elephant came back to the stable after seven days and the king was surprised to see a very tamed animal. Thereby the king was convinced of the fact that lust was cruel and disastrous. At this time, he made a manopranidhāna thinking that only by fulfilling the Buddhakāra-kadhar-mas could one help the suffering people out of samsāra. Then he decided "I should aspire to Buddhahood." Thereafter he retired to the forest and lived as an ascetic. After his death, he was born in heaven.

The third birth was as a Brahman who was known as Brahma because he possessed a body which was as beautiful as a Brahma's. He became an ascetic and had 500 followers of whom the chief was the future Buddha Maitreya. One day he saw a starving tigress who was waiting to eat her newborn babies and sent his chief disciple to look for some flesh. On seeing this, he reflected on the evils of existence and realized that only a Buddha could remove these and one could not become a Buddha without giving one's flesh, blood etc. With the thought "By giving my body, the little animals will be saved and I will attain Buddhahood" he jumped into

the tigress's mouth. By this merit he was born in heaven.

The next birth took place during the time of Buddha Purāṇa Dīpaṅkara, (former Dīpaṅkara). (Buddha Dīpaṅkara, in whose presence Gautama received prediction, is referred to here as Paścima Dīpaṅkara.) In this story, the future Buddha Gautama was a princess. One day, she offered a golden bowl of mustard oil to the former Dīpaṅkara who was begging for oil. The princess aspired mentally to the attainment of Buddhahood and also wished to be born as Siddhārtha, and to attain Buddhahood.¹ (There is doubtless a pun introduced in the story as siddhārtha means also mustard).

The next birth story is during the time of Buddha Brahmadeva when Bodhisattva Gautama was king Atideva. One day, the king saw the Buddha Brahmadeva and was frightened thinking that it was a deity or a Brahma. But the Minister Sirigutta who was the future Buddha Maitreya recognized the Buddha and informed the king

1. A versification of this story by the name of Itibiso Jātaka kāvyaya had appeared in 1718 A.D.. P.B. Sannasgala is of the opinion that this story reached Ceylon through Mahāyāna influence. See. Sinhala Sāhitya vamsaya Colombo, 1961, p.396.

who it was. The king, being overjoyed, rushed to the Buddha and worshipped him with the resolution, "Just as this Buddha saves the people from the samsāra, I shall also do so."

The above five stories are grouped in the category of manopranidhāna, meaning the births in which Gautama made mental resolution. In the seven asaṅkhyā kalpa-lakṣas that elapsed after perfecting manopranidhāna, one lakh and 25 thousand Buddhas appeared. The Bodhisattva Gautama saw all these Buddhas and aspired to Buddhahood.

Then begins the vākpranidhāna or the verbal resolution. The Bodhisattva Gautama was born in the city of Daññavatī as Prince Sāgara, who in due course became a cakravartī king. During this time, the Śākya Buddha named Purāṇa Gautama was preaching the Law in the city of Sirinivāsa. Due to the power of the Law, the hundred thousand world spheres shook. So did the magical chariot of the cakravartī king and descended to the ground from the sky where it was stationed. When the king was informed that it was due to the appearance of a Buddha, he set out to see Buddha Purāṇa Gautama immediately.

He made immense offerings to the Buddha and expressed the wish in words (vākpranidhāna) "Just in the way that you were born in the Śākya clan by the name of Gautama and became a Buddha, may I also be born in the same clan by the same name and become a Buddha". The Buddha Purāṇa Gautama replied that it was quite a task to become a Buddha but yet the prince will become one if he fulfils the perfections etc. Thus the Bodhisattva Gautama received only 'undetermined prediction' (aniyata vivaraṇa). During nine asaṅkhyā kalpas, the Bodhisattva saw three lakhs and 87 thousand Buddhas and made vākpranidhāna. This is followed by the description of the three Buddhas, Taṇhaṅkara, Medhaṅkara and Saraṇaṅkara from whom the Bodhisattva Gautama received aniyata vivaraṇa.

Then come the stories of the 24 Buddhas headed by Dīpaṅkara (same as in the Pali tradition) from whom Gautama received niyatavivaraṇa. The Sinhalese tradition names the prediction received from the 24 Buddhas as niyatavivaraṇa to differentiate from aniyatavivaraṇa received from Buddhas Purāṇa Gautama, Taṇhaṅkara, Medhaṅkara and Saraṇaṅkara¹ who have not been mentioned

1. The Buddhavaṃsa, XXVII, I p.66, the Nidānakathā, V.247 (Jātaka, I, 44) and the Madhuratthavilāsinī, p.131 mention the last three Buddhas by name as those who preceded Dīpaṅkara but no details of their life stories are given.

in the Pali tradition as having given prediction to Gautama. It is probable that the authors of the Sinhalese tradition employed the device of niyatavivaraṇa and aniyatavivaraṇa in order to show that in spite of their deviation, what they said was not inconsistent with the popular 24 vivaraṇas well established in the religion.

We have mentioned that the concept of mano-vākpranidhāna and the series of births of Bodhisattva before Dīpaṅkara's time are absent in the Pali canon or the commentaries. Consequently the question arises as to what the original sources were, on which the Sinhalese works were based. In this connection, a Pali verse quoted in the Saddharmālaṅkāraya which the author says was taken from the Sodattakīnidāna, throws some light.

Cintitaṃ sattasaṅkheyyaṃ nāvasaṅkheyyaṇca vācakaṃ
Kāyavācā catusaṅkheyyaṃ buddhattasamupāgami¹

(With mental resolution during seven incalculable periods, verbal resolution during nine incalculable periods, action and words during four incalculable periods, I attained Buddhahood).

1. Sdlk., p.86. The three compounds should read sattāsaṅkheyyaṃ, navāsaṅkheyyaṃ and caturāsaṅkheyyaṃ respectively).

The same verse occurs in the Jinakālamālī,¹ a Pali work written in Siam (1516 A.D.) by the Siamese monk Ratanapañña where only one word, is different: in place of kāyavācā catusaṅkheyyam there appears kāyavācasikhañ-cāti. The mano and vākpranidhāna and the stories of the former births of Gautama beyond Sumedha given in the Jinakālamālī are identical with and are in the same order as those in the Saddharmālaṅkāraya and the Saddharmarat-nākaraya. A number of verses describing the seven asaṅkheyyas in which Buddha made mental resolutions as Nanda, Sunanda etc. and the nine asaṅkheyyas in which he made verbal resolutions as Sabbabhadda, Sabbaphulla etc. (Sabbabhadda in the Jinakālamālī) are identical in the Sinhalese sources and the Jinakālamālī except a word here and there. Jayawickrama² observed that a Pali work called Mahāsampindanidāna³ written sometime during the

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1. Ed. A.P. Buddhatta, PTS Colombo, 1956. In the preface, the editor says that the Jinakālamālī seems to have drawn its material from books like Tathāgatuppatti which are related to the Mahāyāna.
 2. The Sheaf of garlands of the epochs of the conqueror, being a translation of Jinakālamālīpakaraṇaṃ, tr. N.A. Jayawickrama, London, 1968, p XIX
 3. A manuscript of this work is in the Colombo Museum. The one by the name of Sampindanidāna in the Sinhalese language belonging to the Nevill catalogue in British museum does not apparently contain the above information.

period eleventh to thirteenth centuries offers a close parallel to the Jinakālamālī even to the extent of the arrangement of the subject matter. He adds that the Mahānidānakathā (section dealing with mano-vākpranidhāna) in the Jinakālamālī appears to be a summary of a source quite similar to Mahāsampindanidāna, and says further that it is to be assumed that the source book of the Jinakālamālī was a Ceylonese Pali work closer to the time, the Jinakālamālī was written than the earlier Pali sources.

On the basis of the foregoing data, we may surmise that the Jinakālamālī as well as the Sinhalese works, Saddharmālaṅkāraya and the Saddharmaratnākaraya have drawn their source material from a nidānakathā tradition of which the main contributors were the Mahāsampindanidāna and the Sotattakīnidāna. As further evidence, we may refer to Buddhadatta¹ who pointed out that the Mahāsampindanidāna mentions a nidāna work called Sātattakī.

"Daḥhappajavhassa namo jinassa

Saddhammasaṅghassa nijakkhamassa

Vakkhāmi sambuddhaparamparāgatam

Sātattakīnāma mahānidānam"

1. Pali Sāhityaya, Ambalangoda, 1962, pp.456,457.

Though the above appears as the last verse in the Mahāsampīḍanīdāna manuscript, the contents of the verse suggest that it should be the beginning of the Sātattakīnīdāna or Sātattakīmahānīdāna.

Our view is further supported by the fact that the Mahāsampīḍanīdāna and the Sotattakīnīdāna have been mentioned as source works for the eighteenth century Sinhalese work Saddharmāvavādasangrahaya¹, where a similar treatment of mano-vākpranīdhāna occurs. The author of this work says in the beginning of the second chapter, 'I shall show here the nīdānakathās as come down in the Solasakīnīdāna, Sodattakanīdāna and the Mahāsampīḍanīdāna'.

It is significant that the Mahāsampīḍanīdāna, a common source for the mano-vākpranīdhāna tradition contains an important legend concerning Buddha Maitreya which has been known in traditions associated with Mahāyāna, but, which apparently does not find mention in the Theravāda works.

The Mahāsampīḍanīdāna legend recounts how Elder

1. Written by Siddhārtha Buddhārakṣita, ed. S.J. Kierti-chandra and S.T. Kalingwansa, Panadura, 1930, p.24.

Mahākassapa made the following three resolutions just before his death at the age of 120 years: that his dead body be preserved on the mountain Kukkuṭasampāta covered with the three peaks, that the three peaks move apart when king Ajātasattu arrives to see the deadbody and that his funeral be performed on the palm of Metteyya when the latter causes it to open of itself.

This legend also occurs in a rudimentary form in the Divyāvadāna¹ where it is stated that when Maitreya arrives, he will find only the perfect compact skeleton of Mahākāśyapa.

Fa-hsien² was also aware of the legend when he states that he came to a mountain named Gurupāda³ inside which Mahākāśyapa remained. He made a clift and went into it and saw there the complete body of Kāśyapa. He also mentions that the mountain was occupied by Arhats and that devotees made offerings to Mahākāśyapa.

Hsüan-tsang provides the most complete description of this legend. He also mentions that various versions

1. Divy ., p.61.

2. James Legge, A record of the Buddhist Kingdoms, Oxford, 1886, pp.92,93.

3. Kukkuṭapādagiri was also known as Gurupādāḥ giri.
See BRWW., Vol.II, p.142.

of the legend existed in several Buddhist treatises at the time he visited India.¹ The legend as narrated by Hsüan-tsang² states that the Elder Mahākāśyapa awaited the arrival of Buddha Maitreya at Kukkuṭapādagiri (Cock's-foot mountain) in the district of Magadha. On the verge of attaining maḥāparinirvāṇa, the Buddha commissioned Elder Mahākāśyapa to preserve the true Law, (It was in complying with this request that Mahākāśyapa convened the first Buddhist council) and deliver Buddha's kaṣāya cīvara (golden robe) to Maitreya on the attainment of Buddhahood. Nearing death, Mahākāśyapa reached the middle point of the three peaks of the Cock's foot mountain. There he took Buddha's kaṣāya robe and made a vow, on which the three peaks covered him over. In future, when Maitreya becomes perfect Buddha and causes it to open of itself, Kāśyapa will be delivering the robe and enter nirvāṇa.

Thus the Mahāsampinḍanidāna, being a common source for the mano-vākpranidhāna tradition in Sinhalese and

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1. Thomas Watters, On Yuan Chwang's travels in India, London, 1904-05, Vol.II, pp.143,144.
 2. BRWW., Vol.II, pp.142ff. I-tsing also ascended this mountain. See Takakusu, op.cit., pp.XXIX,XXXIII. Also see E.Abegg, Messiasglaube in Indien und Iran, Berlin & Leipzig, 1928. pp.157,158.

Pali works would indicate how non-Theravāda ideas percolated into later Ceylonese works. This adds evidence to show how the similarity we noted earlier between the concepts bodhicitta and mano-vākpranidhāna came about through the influence of Mahāyāna sources.

Further evidence on the manopranidhāna concept is provided in Burmese works. Source works closely connected with the Mahāsampindanidāna such as Sotattakīnidāna and Jātattakīnidāna appear to have been well known in Burmese literature. The Burmese Pitakat -Thamaing, an account of literary works of Burma and their authors mentions a work called Sotattakī written by Cullabuddhaghosa at Mahāvihāra in Anurādhapura.¹ A Jātattakī-sotattakī-nidāna-aṭṭhakathā is mentioned in the list of texts given in an inscription at Pagan collected by Forchhammer.² The Gandhavamsa mentions that an ācariya named Cullabuddhaghosa composed two works called Jātattagīnidāna and Sotattagīnidāna.³ The author of the Jināttha Pakāsanī,⁴

1. Pitakat-Thamaing, (Burmese script) Rangoon, 1905, p.51

2. This information is derived from M.H.Bode, op.cit., p.104.

3. Gandhavamsa ed. in JPTS., 1886, p.63. & p.72.

4. Ed. Kyi-thè Le-dat Hsaya-daw, Mandalay, 1923, Printed version of this work appeared for the first time in the nineteenth century.

a Burmese prose work on the life of Buddha says that one of the works he consulted was Sātattakīnidāna (or Sotattakīnidāna).

It is probable that Bigandet¹ based the following account of the life of the Burmese Buddha on the mano-vākpranidhāna tradition that was known in Burmese religious works.

"For seven thingies [asaṅkheyya] or worlds, he who was to become a Buddha felt, during that immense number of revolutions of nature, a thought for the Buddhaship awakening in his soul. This thought was succeeded by a wish, a desire and a longing for that extra-ordinary calling ... No less than 125,000 Buddhas appeared during that space of time.

When the above period had at last come to an end the inward workings of his sould prompted him to mask openly for the Buddhaship. The period of asking lasted nine thingies of worlds. It was brightened and illustrated by the successive manifestation of 987,000 Buddhas. In the beginning of this latter

1. P. Bigandet, The life or legend of Gaudama: The Buddha of the Burmese, London, 1914, pp.6,7.

period, the future Gaudama was a prince of the name of Laukatara, ruler of the Nanda country. At that time there appeared in the country of Kapilawot a Buddha called Thakiamuni Purāṇa Gaudama. As he happened to travel through Nanda country with the two-fold object of preaching the Law and begging for his food, the ruler Laukatara made great offerings to him. Meanwhile with a marked earnestness, he solicited at the feet of Thakiamuni the favour of becoming at some future time a Buddha like himself. He expressed the wish to be born in the same country from the same father and mother etc. To this request, Thakiamuni replied in the affirmative but he added that an immense length of time had still to elapse ere the objects of his petition could be fully granted. A similar application was repeatedly made to all the other succeeding Buddhas and a like promise was held out to him."

We may now turn our attention to the birth stories of Gautama mentioned above as belonging to the mano-vāk-pranidhāna group, with a view to tracing wherever possible their original sources. The first story in the series,

the episode of the son who practised the mātuposaka dharma has no connection with the story by the name of Mātuposaka Jātaka¹ in the Pali Jātaka collection. Gombrich² has pointed out that the former is very similar to the Mahājanaka Jātaka³ and he seems to be almost certain that the story in the Saddharmālaṅkāraya is based on the Mahājanaka Jātaka. The story of the Mahājanaka Jātaka is as follows. The Bodhisattva had taken birth as prince Mahājanaka. He attended on his widowed mother throughout his life. Once when the ship he had boarded was wrecked (his mother was not there with him), he swam desperately for seven days and was saved by the guardian deity of the sea. It was the duty of the Goddess Maṇimekhalā, the guardian deity of the sea, to save from drowning those who looked after their maternal parents. Gombrich has also shown that the story of the son practising mātuposakadharmā is very popular in Ceylon and there are numerous poetic compositions based on the story.

1. Jātaka, ed. Fausbøll, London, 1964, No.455.

2. 'Feminine elements in Sinhalese Buddhism', Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens, Vol.XVI, 1972.

3. Jātaka., No.539.

Then comes the story about King Śatrutāpa. This has not yet been traced to any Pali source. The first story of Kṣemendra's Avadānakalpalatā,¹ namely the Prabhāsavadāna, is identical with the story of Śatrutāpa though with variations in proper names. King Śatrutāpa and Sirimatī are known as Prabhāsa and Prabhāvatī in the Prabhāsavadāna. The following verse in the Prabhāsavadāna indicates that the pranidhāna was the principal motive of the story.

Iti buddhābhīdhāṃ śrutvā samyak sambodhicetasāḥ
Rājñāḥ prāgjanmajābhyāsapranidhānam ajāyata

Therefore could the story have been taken from a series of stories dealing with pranidhāna?

The story of Śatrutāpa also appears in the Nepalese manuscripts of the Jātakamāla entitled Bodhisattva Avadāna, in a slightly different manner under the name Subhāsa Jātaka. We quote here a summary of the same given by Rajendralala Mitra in his Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal.

"In one of his former existences the Lord was

1. Ed., P.L.Vaidya, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, No.22, Darbhanga, 1959, Vol.1, pp.7-11.

a king, Suprabhāsa by name. He was very irascible, and, in an angry moment, severely scolded an elephant driver, who in return spoke to him at length on the merits of charity, mercy, forgiveness & c. This reacted on the mind of the king, who gradually began to long for Bodhi knowledge."¹

Third in the series is the Vyāghrī Jātaka which is not found in the Pali Jātaka collection or the Cariyāpiṭaka. The first trace of the story of Vyāghrī Jātaka is found in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya from which Avadāna No.32 of the Divyāvadāna seems to have been taken.² The story in the Divyāvadāna³ illustrates three births of the Bodhisattva that extol the same virtue- the virtue of giving away one's flesh.

The following is the summary of the Vyāghrī story:

There lived a beautiful woman called Rūpāvatī in the city of Utpalāvatī. During a famine, she once saw a woman starving to death and on the verge of eating the flesh of her newly born baby. Rūpāvatī said to the woman that she would bring something from her home in a moment. Yet she thought to herself that if she took the child with

1. Rajendralala Mitra, Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal, Calcutta, 1882, p.49.

2. The Jātakamālā of Āryaśūra: A Selection, ed.tr. R.C. Dwivedi & M.R. Bhat, Delhi, 1966, Introduction.

3. Divy ., pp.469ff.

her, the woman would die; if she left him, the child would be eaten. It struck her that it was only by offering her own flesh and blood to the woman that both would survive. She cut off her breasts and offered them to her. But in a moment she regained her breasts by 'the act of truth'. There appeared the Śakra in the form of a Brahman and spoke to Rūpāvatī. To him she explained that she offered her blood not for the sake of kingship, wealth or heavenly bliss but for the attainment of perfect enlightenment, and she wished by the 'act of truth' she might turn into a male. At that very moment, this wish came true and she was known as the Prince Rūpavata, who later became king of the country. After his death, he was born in the family of a millionaire householder. As an extremely beautiful child he surpassed the moon and was named Candraprabha. When he was eight years old, he said to his 500 fellow pupils that they all should keep their mind on perfect Enlightenment (anuttaram samyaksambodhim cittam utpādayema). Later he offered his flesh to a bird. After death, he was again born in the same kingdom, in the family of a noble Brahman. This time too, as he was an extremely beautiful child and surpassed the beauty of Brahmā, he was named

Brahmaprabha. Later he became an ascetic and lived in the forest. At the time, there lived two Brahman sages in the same forest. Not far from the place where the ascetic Brahmaprabha dwelt, he saw a tigress afflicted with severe hunger who was about to devour her newly born cubs. He informed the two sages of this. Then he thought of offering his body to the tigress. As he knew that the tigress would not devour a living body, he performed an 'act of truth' by which his neck presented itself to the tigress.

The story of the Vyāghrī occurs also as Avadāna No.95 in the Avadāna-Kalpalatā¹ and in the chapter on the tigress in the Suvarṇabhasottamasūtra². It is noteworthy to find that the Nepalese manuscripts³ of the Jātakamālā contains the story of Śatrutāpa as first and the Vyāghrī Jātaka as the second. Godakumbura⁴ thinks that since the order of the two stories is the same in the Saddharmālaṅkāraya, its author has derived these two stories from a similar version of the Jātakamālā. In

1. ed. P.L. Vaidya, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts, No.23 Darbhanga, 1959, Vol.II.

2. ed. J.Nobel, Leipzig, 1937; tr. R.E. Emmerick, The Sūtra of golden light, London, 1970.

3. Rajendralala Mitra, op.cit., pp.49,50,

4. UCR., Vol.I.No.I.p.88.

the printed version of Jātakamālā Vyāghrī Jātaka appears as the first story. According to Speyer, Āryaśūra put the story of the tigress as a mark of honour for his teacher who had celebrated that Jātaka.¹ Āryaśūra speaks about his teacher and the Vyāghrī Jātaka in the following manner;

"which has been celebrated by my guru, a venerator of the Three Jewels, an authority because of his thorough study of virtues, and beloved by his own guru by virtue of his religious practices."²

The tremendous impact the Vyāghrī Jātaka made on Buddhists at the time is evidenced by the legend preserved by Tāranātha³, the historian of Tibetan Buddhism. We quote here the English translation⁴ of a portion of Oldenburg's paper in Russian which discusses the legend.

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1. Jātakamālā or Garland of birth stories by Āryaśūra, trans. J.S.Speyer, S.BB. London, 1895, Vol.I, Introduction, p.XXV.
 2. Ibid., p.2.
 3. Cf. Tāranātha'i rGya-ga-cho-'byuñ (Tāranātha's Tibetan Text), St. Petersburg, 1868; A.Schiefner, Taranatha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien, (German tr.), St.Petersburg, 1869; D.Chattopadhyaya, Tāranātha's history of Buddhism in India (Eng.tr.), Simla, 1970.
 4. H.Wenzel, 'Dr.Serge D'Oldenburg, on the Buddhist Jātakas.' JRAS, 1893, pp.301ff.

"Pondering on the Bodhisattva's gift of his own body to the tigress, he (viz. Śūra), thought he could do the same, as it was not so very difficult. Once he, as in the tale, saw a tigress followed by her young, near starvation; at first he could not resolve on the self-sacrifice, but, calling forth a stronger faith in the Buddha, and writing, with his own blood, a prayer of seventy ślokas, he first gave the tigress his blood to drink, and, when their bodies had taken a little force, offered himself."

The Vyāghrī Jātaka seems to have appealed to the Sinhalese writers. The popularity of the story is even more remarkable as the story of the tigress does not appear in the Pali as we know it.

A verse from the twelfth century Sinhalese epic poem 'Sasadāvata'¹ which makes reference to the Vyāghrī Jātaka is as follows:

"Was it not you (in a previous birth) who saved the tigress and her cubs by jumping into the mouth of the tigress who was about to devour her newly born babies out of starvation?"

1. Ed. Munidasa Kumaranatunga, Colombo, 1940, v.275.

This verse is followed by one which refers to the Hastijātaka, the story of the elephant who offered himself to the starving merchants. This story again does not occur in the Pali Jātaka collection. Like the Vyāghrī Jātaka, it is found in the Jātakamālā. (No.30)

The twelfth century Sinhalese prose work Dharmapradīpikāva, in describing the virtues of maitrī quotes the following stanza which may have been taken from a version of the Vyāghrī-Jātaka.

"Vyāghrī dr̥ṣṭvā harinyās svasutam iva kṛṣaṃ pāyayatyāsu
śāvam

Barhicchāyāṃ bhujaṅgaḥ praviśati śikhinām ātapaiḥ
khinnadehaḥ

Kṛḍantyāśīviṣāṇāṃ viśadahanavatām muṣikā bhogagarbhe

Kurvann evaṃ hī maitryā vasati girivane yas tu tasmai
namo'stu"¹

It is to be noted that the element of self-sacrifice so strongly emphasized in the Vyāghrī Jātaka caught the imagination of the Sinhalese Buddhists. This may be evidenced by the frequency with which the Vyāghrī Jātaka is retold or alluded to in Sinhalese Literature. Characteristically enough, the Vyāghrī Jātaka which does not

1. Dharmapradīpikāva p.175.

occur in the Pali Jātaka version has been highlighted in texts such as the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, the Jātakamāla, Avadānakalpalatā and the Divyāvadāna.

As has been shown above, two of the stories illustrated in the mano-vākpranidhāna descriptions of the Sinhalese works, i.e. the stories of Śatrutāpa and Vyāghrī have been derived from texts of Sarvāstivāda origin where Mahāyāna elements were discernible. We have also observed that the mano-vākpranidhāna concepts may have come about through the influence of Mahāyāna ideas. Thus it is to be assumed that the Sinhalese writers borrowed the concept of mano-vākpranidhāna along with the stories connected with it from a tradition associated with Mahāyāna.

Chapter IV

Maitreya and other future Buddhas

An important difference between Mahāyāna and the Theravāda lies in their respective treatment of future Buddhas. We will be discussing in this chapter the evolution of the idea of the future Buddha Maitreya as reflected in the Pali works and how the worship of Maitreya later developed into a cult under the influence of the Bodhisattva worship in the Mahāyāna and the bhakti ideal associated with it. An attempt will also be made to examine the cult of Maitreya as represented in the Sinhalese works specially of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries during which time the cult reached its peak in Ceylon.

Maitreya (P. Metteyya, Sin. Mete, Maitreya, Maitrī) is the only Bodhisattva common to both Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions. Both the traditions agree that Maitreya is the next in line of Buddhas after Gautama. The Theravāda mentions only Maitreya whereas the Mahāyāna names a number of saviours to come.

The general possibility of the future Buddhas was

expressed by the Buddha Gautama already in the Parinibbāna Sutta.

"Ye pi bhikkhave bhavissanti anāgatam addhānam arahanto sammāsambuddhā tesam'pi bhagavantānām etapparamā yeva upaṭṭhakā bhavissanti seyyathāpi mayham Ānando."¹

The Buddha referred to the appearance of the future Buddha Metteyya in brief, in the Cakkavatti Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya.

"Ketumatiyā rājadhāniyā Saṃkho nāma rājā uppajjissati... Metteyya nāma Bhagavā loke uppajjissati araham Sammā Sambuddho ... So anekasahassam bhikkhusaṃgham pariharissati, seyyathāpi'ham etarahi anekasatam bhikkhusaṃgham pariharāmi"²

Nevertheless Metteyya is mentioned in the Pali canon on a very few occasions. There occurs but a passing reference to Metteyya in the Buddhavamsa; that too is said to be a later addition.

Aham etarahi sambuddho Metteyo cāpi hessati

Ete p'ime pañca buddhā dhīrā lokānukampakā ³

1. D., XVI I, 16-17 II pp.82f.

2. D., III, XXVI, 24-25, pp.75f

3. Bv., p.67.

The Pali Milindapañha speaks of the future Buddha Metteyya and his retinue in the following manner.

"Puna ca Metteyyassa bhagavato sabhāvaguṇaṃ
paridīpayamānena evaṃ bhaṇitaṃ: So anekasahassaṃ
bhikkhusaṅghaṃ pariharissati seyyathāpi ahaṃ etarahi
anekasataṃ bhikkhusaṅghaṃ pariharāmiṭi."¹

Already in the Visuddhimagga the wish of a good Buddhist was to see the Buddha Metteyya.

"Antime attabhāvamhi Metteyyam munipuṅgavam
Lokaggapuggalaṃ nāthaṃ sabbasattahite ratam
Disvāna tassa dhīrassa sutvā saddhammadesanam
Adhigantvā phalam aggam sobheyyaṃ Jinasāsanam."²

It is the Pali Anāgatavaṃsa³ that does an elaborate treatment of the future Buddha Metteyya. This is a work in verse devoted entirely to the life and career of the future Buddha Metteyya which serves as a supplement to the Buddhavaṃsa.⁴ (There seem to have been a number of manuscripts of the Anāgatavaṃsa in Pali, which differ from one another in content and style.) The Buddha is

1. Mil., p.159.

2. Vm., p.713.

3. Ed. Minayeff. JPTS 1886. Details given also in Vm., p.434; Atthasālinī, p.415.

4. B.C.Law, His.P.Lit., Vol.II, pp.611ff.

said to have expounded the Anāgatavamsadesanā when Sāriputta asked about the birth of Buddha Metteyya. Metteyya would be born by the name of Ajita in the Ketumatī rājadhāni during the time of cakkavatti king Saṅkha. Candamukhī will be his wife and Brah-mavaddhana, his son. Asoka and Brahmadeva will be the two disciples when Metteyya attains Buddhahood.

"tadā ketumatī nāma rājadhāni bhavissati
dvādasayojanāyāmā sattayojanavitthata
ākiṇṇā naranārīhi pāsādehi vicittitā
sevitā suddhasattehi ajeyyā dhammarakkhitā
saṅkho nāmāsi so rājā anantabalavāhano
sattaratanasampanno cakkavatti mahabbalo
.....
ajito nāma nāmena metteyyo dvipaduttamo
anubyañjanasampanno dvattiṃsavaralakkhaṇo"¹

Of the northern Buddhist authorities, the Mahāvastu says that the Buddha Gautama has made the proclamation that Maitreya would be the next Buddha after him. The following words are put in the mouth of the Buddha Gautama.

"Exalted Buddhas do not pass away until they

1. Anāgav., p.42 ff.

have anointed an heir to the throne. As I now proclaim Maitreya, he will become the Buddha next after me."¹

The Mahāvastu² also gives details about Maitreya: Maitreya's city will be Ketumatī, twelve yojanas in length and seven in width, and Maitreya will instruct 700 koṭis of disciples, etc.

"Eteṣāṃ buddhānāṃ paramparāye
Maitreyo paścimako bhaviśyati
Mahānubhāvo ṛṣisaṅghanāyako
Vineṣyati koṭiśatāni saptati
Puraskṛto śramaṇagaṇasya nāyako
Pravekṣyati Ketumatīṃ sunirmitāṃ."

The Maitreyāvadāna in the Dīvyāvadāna deals with the advent of Maitreya in a similar manner.

"Now when Maitreya will be the Tathāgata, Ketumatī will be the royal capital. It will be twelve yojanas long and seven wide. It will be surrounded by seven walls of gold and seven rows of beautiful palm trees ..."³

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1. Mhvu., tr. J.J.Jones Vol.I.p.52.
 2. Mhvu., Vol.III, p.240.
 3. Dīvyā., Chap.III, p.55 f.

A good Mahāyāna believer would be born in the Tuṣita heaven (where Maitreya dwells until such time as he appears as Buddha) after death, so that he can listen to the Law preached by Maitreya,¹ as reflected in the Saddharmapundarīka.²

"He (who writes the dharmaparyāya of the Lotus of the True Law) shall not sink down into a state of wretchedness and after disappearing from this world, he shall enter the company of the Tuṣita Gods, where the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Maitreya is residing and where, marked by the thirty two sublime characteristics, surrounded by a host of Bodhisattvas, and waited upon by hundred thousands of myriads of kotis of heavenly nymphs he is preaching the Law."

The worship of Maitreya appears to have been more popular in the Mahāyāna than in early Buddhism.

1. According to Abegg, this was the wish of every Mahāyāna believer. Cf. A. Abegg, Der Messiasglaube in Buddhismus, Berlin, & Leipzig, 1928, p.198. It should be noted that this wish was overshadowed by the wish of seeing Buddha Amitābha.

2. Sdmp., tr. p.436.

The Maitreyavyākaraṇa or the Maitreyasamiti¹ which constitutes the Sanskrit version of the prophesy of Maitreya has been widely known and has enjoyed popularity for a considerable length of time beyond also the boundaries of India. Chinese versions of the work by Dharmarakṣa (255-316 A.D.), Kumārajīva (about 402 A.D.) and I-tsing (701 A.D.) have been known. Fragments of the Maitreya-vyākaraṇa have been found in central Asia in Tokharian and Uigurian languages with the title Maitreyasamiti.² There also existed a Buddhist sect in China by the name of Wu-hsing-tsung (lit. school of the five-fold nature) which regarded Maitreya as its founder.³ The worship of Maitreya had been in vogue in India, as is evidenced from the reports of Fa-hsien's travels. Fa-hsien records⁴ that in the kingdom of To-li, where there was a congregation of priests belonging to the Little Vehicle,

1. Ed. & trans. into German by E. Leumann as Maitreya-samiti, das Zukunftsideal der Buddhisten, Strassburg, 1919. In this same work appears the German trans. of the different Chinese versions by W. Watanabe.

2. Winternitz., op.cit., p.273.

3. E.J. Eitel, Handbook of Chinese Buddhism., Hong Kong, 1888, p.92; Ārya-Maitreya-vyākaraṇam, ed. Prabhas Chandra Majumder, Calcutta, 1959, Introduction.

4. S. Beal, Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-yun, London, 1869. pp.18ff; J. Legge, op.cit., pp.24,25.

an Arhat by his spiritual power, sent a sculptor to the Tuṣita heaven to see for himself the size, colours, marks and general appearance of Maitreya Bodhisattva. It was after three visits, that the sculptor completed the wooden image which was 94 feet high. This image seems to have been an important object of veneration since we read that princes of all neighbouring countries made religious offerings to it. Hsüan-tsang ¹(629 A.D.) too had seen this image of Maitreya by the side of a great saṅghārāma in the valley of Ta-li-lo (on the right or western bank of the Indus). He refers to the image as possessing 'a secret spiritual power of miracle'.

Hsüan-tsang had also heard of instances when saints used to go to the Tuṣita heaven with queries for explanation from Maitreya. The Bodhisattva Ti-p'o (Deva) of Chi-sse-tseu (Island of Ceylon) approached the Arhat Wu-ta-lo (Uttara) who was renowned for his high spiritual powers and presented his questions one after the other. When the latter could not answer any more, he went up to the Tuṣita heaven using his divine faculties secretly and got the answers from Maitreya. However, Deva

1. BR.VV., Vol.I, p.134.

recognized that the explanation was Maitreya's.¹

It was the earnest wish² of Hsüan-tsang to be born in the Tuṣita heaven and behold Maitreya himself. He is said to have repeated on his death-bed some verses in adoration of Maitreya.³

References to visiting Maitreya in the Tuṣita heaven or to being born there are rather rare in the Pali works.⁴ However a selected few are said to have been born in the Tuṣita, for instance, king Duṭṭhagāmaṇī.⁵

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1. BRVW., Vol.II, pp.228f. A similar anecdote known in Chinese Buddhism refers to an Arhat who approached Maitreya to get explanation to a question by the seventeenth patriarch Sañghanandi. See J.Edkins, Chinese Buddhism., Trübner's Oriental Series, London, 1893, p.80.
 2. S. Beal points out that the short Chinese inscription found at Buddha Gaya, which he attributes to a period not later than the second century A.D., is occupied chiefly with aspiration for the Tuṣita heaven, See JRAS., N.S., Vol.XIII, pp.552f; Indian Antiquary, Vol.X, p.193.
 3. S. Beal, The life of Hiuen-Tsiang, London, 1911, p.217.
 4. It was the general practice for all Bodhisattvas to be born in this heaven in their last birth but one. Cf. G.P. Malalasekara, Dict. P.Prop. Nouns, pp.1033-1034.
 5. Mv., 32.72f.

The Pali Mahāsampindanidāna which we alluded to in the earlier chapter as a work associated with a non-Theravāda tradition narrates the visit of thera Dhammadinna and upāsaka Cullagalla of Ceylon to the Tusita heaven to see Metteyya. Another Pali work, Rasavāhinī¹ written around the first half of the fourteenth century² contains a story of how thera Maliyadeva and upāsaka Cullagalla encountered Metteyya on their visit to Tāvatisa heaven to worship Cūlāmaṇi-cetiya.³

The influence of the Maitreya cult was becoming so prominent in India that the exponents of Mahāyāna Buddhism began to credit their teachings to Maitreya. Hsüan-tsang wrote that Bodhisattva Asaṅga who lived in a saṅghārāma in Ayodhyā went at night to the palace of Bodhisattva Maitreya and "there received the Yogācārya Śāstra, the Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṅkāratīkā, the Madhyānta Vibhaṅga Śāstra etc. and afterwards declared these to the great congregation, in their deep principles"⁴

1. Rasavāhinī, ed. Kiriālle Gñānavimala, Colombo, 1961, pp.256ff.

2. B.C.Law, His.P.Lit., Vol.II, p.625.

3. After his death, upāsaka Cullagalla was born in Tusita heaven.

4. BRWW., Vol.I, p.226.

Tāranātha¹ gives a vivid description of Asaṅga's visits to Tuṣita heaven and his listening to the 'Five Works of Maitreya', i.e. Sūtrālaṅkāra, Madhyānta-vibhaṅga, Dharma-dharmatā-vibhaṅga, Uttaratantra and Abhisamaya-alāṅkāra.²

The popularity of the cult of Maitreya was also seen when a Chinese ruler was acclaimed as Maitreya. The mother of the sixth emperor of the T'ang dynasty in China who held the reins of power, since, the son was too weak to rule was hailed as Maitreya. A new Buddhist sūtra, Tayün-king (Great cloud Sūtra) presented to the emperor's mother in 690 A.D. stated that she was the future Buddha Maitreya and the ruler of the Jambu continent.³

Awaiting the arrival of Maitreya by saints became popular in India. Hsüan-tsang had met many a saint

1. Tāra.His.Bud.Ind., pp.154ff.

2. Also see Bu-ston, A history of Buddhism, tr.E.E. Obermiller, Heidelberg, 1931-2, i, 53f.

3. J.Edkins, op.cit., p.122. For identification of kings with Maitreya see below pp. 380 ff.

who awaited the arrival of Maitreya. In T'o-na-kie-tse-kia (Dhanakataka) the master of Śāstras, P'o-pi-fei-kia (Bhāvaviveka) remained in the palace of the Asuras, awaiting the arrival of Maitreya Bodhisattva as perfect Buddha.¹ In the caverns of Mount Gośrṅga, in the district of K'iu-sa-ta-na- (Khotan), there was an Arhat absorbed in ecstasy awaiting the coming of the Buddha Maitreya.²

From I-tsing's record too, we learn that the religious goal he aspired to after performing meritorious deeds was to behold Maitreya when the latter appears as the Buddha and then to wish for Buddhahood.

"Deep as the depth of a lake be my pure and calm meditation. Let me look for the first meeting under the Tree of the Dragon Flower (Nāga tree) when I hear the deep rippling voice of the Buddha Maitreya. Passing through the four modes of birth, I would desire to perfect my mind and thus fulfil

1. BRWN., Vol.II, p.223.

2. Ibid., p. 313

the three long kalpas (ages) required for Buddhahood."¹

"... I expressed my desire for a general reunion under the Nāga tree to meet the honoured (Buddha) Maitreya and to conform to the doctrine and then to obtain the knowledge that is not subject to births..."²

I-tsing exhorts to the devotees in the following manner:

"...Thus conducting ourselves and helped by good friends, our mind will be stable till the last moment of our life. With resolutions rightly performed, we should look forward to meeting the coming Buddha Maitreya. If we wish to gain the 'lesser fruition' (of the Hīnayāna), we may proceed to pursue it through the eight grades of sanctification. But if we learn to follow the course of the 'greater fruition' (of the Mahāyāna), we must try to accomplish our work through the three asaṅkhyā kalpas..."³

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1. A record of the Buddhist religion as practised in India and the Malay Archipelago by I-tsing, tr.J.Takakusu ,p.213
 2. Ibid., p.XXXIII
 3. Ibid., pp.196,197.

Although Maitreya was known from very early times in Ceylon, the worship and veneration of Maitreya began before or around the fifth century A.D. King Jetṭhatissa II (328-337 A.D.) is said to have made a beautiful image of Metteyya in ivory.¹ When the theras of Mahāvihāra read the first work of Buddhaghosa (fifth century A.D.) namely Visuddhimagga, they were so impressed by his knowledge in the Teachings, that according to the Cūlavamsa, they joyfully exclaimed "This is certainly Metteyya."² The wish of Buddhaghosa, however as expressed in his works was, we have already observed, to be born in the time of Metteyya and attain Arahantship.³

Thus it appears that the idea that one has to await the arrival of Maitreya to attain nirvāṇa was being established around the time of Buddhaghosa. This fact is further evidenced in an incident which Buddhaghosa refers to.⁴ A vast gathering of people assembled to see thera Mahāsaṅgharakkhita on hearing that he had attained

1. Cv., 37.102

2. Atha ugghosayī saṃgho tuṭṭhahatṭha viśesato
Nissamsayam sa Metteyyo iti vatvā punaḥpunam

3. Vm., II, 713; Atthasālinī, 431.

Cv., 37.242

4. Vm., p.47;

mibbāna. When the thera was informed of the gathering, he confessed that he postponed the attainment of arahantship to Metteyya's time and did not practise vipassanā. However, he attained arahantship at that very moment since his conduct from the time of ordination was extremely pure.¹

The growing importance of the worship of Metteyya is reflected in the Mahāvamsa² (fifth century) when it attributed to its hero Duṭṭhagāmaṇī a future birth as first disciple of Metteyya. Not only to Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, but also to his parents, brother and son is tribute paid. Queen Vihāramahādevī and King Kāvantissa will be Metteyya's parents. Duṭṭhagāmaṇī's brother Saddhātissa, and his son Sāliarājakumāra will be Metteyya's second disciple and son respectively.

Though the worship of Maitreya has been current from about the fifth century, it appears to have acquired a new impetus from around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the extant Sinhalese literature, the

1. This incident has been cited as an illustration of the virtue of average men (puthujjanakalyāṇakāṇaṃ sīlaṃ) as a proximate cause of sanctity (arahatta)

2. Mv., 32.81-83; Also see Pjv., p.680.

Dharmapradīpikāva¹ written around the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century is one of the earliest works that narrate the legend of the future Buddha Maitreya. The Saddharmaratnāvaliya² (thirteenth century), the Pūjāvaliya³ (thirteenth century), the Saddharmālaṅkāraya⁴ and the Saddharmaratnākaraya⁵, both of the early part of the fifteenth century, all devote almost a whole chapter to the story of Maitreya with elaborate descriptions of the city of Ketumatī, the splendour of the cakravartī king Saṅkha and types of people who will and who will not have the opportunity of beholding Buddha Maitreya.⁶ The Sinhala Anāgatavaṃsaya

1. pp.206-208.

2. Srtnv., pp.1220-1245.

3. Pjv., pp.244-252.

4. Sdlk, Chap.24.

5. Srtnk., Chap.5.

6. The Laṅkātilaka rock inscription of Bhuvanekabāhu IV (1344 A.D.), the Laṅkātilaka rock inscription of Vikramabāhu III (1357-1374 A.D.) and the copper plates of Bhuvanekabāhu IV and Vikramabāhu III mention that those who forcibly appropriate anything belonging to the grants referred to in the inscriptions "will be born in the four evil states of existence such as hells and will not be able to see Mete Budun (the future Buddha Maitreya).

See UCR., 18-19, 1960-61, pp.9,17,32.

or the Mete Budu Sirita (life of Buddha Maitreya) of the fourteenth century, based on the Pali Anāgatavamsa and its commentary¹ is entirely devoted to the story of Maitreya.

As will be seen, the emphasis given to the treatment of Maitreya by Sinhalese writers leads to the conclusion that the belief in Maitreya was developing into a fully-fledged cult in Ceylon in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

We quote here a few passages from the Sinhala Anāgatavamsaya which have their parallels in all the above mentioned Sinhalese works and which of course are based on the Pali Anāgatavamsa.

"The people who have given alms to the poor, travellers, recluses and Brahmans will behold the Buddha Maitreya. So also will those who have practised the five precepts, or ten precepts, or celibacy, and also those who have built dagābas, who have grown trees or flower gardens or fruit gardens; so also will those who have built ponds in parks or

1. C.E. Godakumbura, Sin.Lit., p.102.

bridges or platforms; and those who have built resting places, or roads or preaching halls or refectories, or wells; those who have placed vessels of drinking water at the wayside; those who have contributed to the Buddhist Order; those who have made pavillions for preachers; who have decorated pulpits, who have donated book-rests and book-wraps or fans; those who have put up canopies in the preaching hall; those who have given garlands for the canopies; those who have offered gold, silver or perfumed flowers or powder or incense; those who have lit lamps in the preaching hall; those who have invited a priest to preach a sermon; those who have sung a chorus of sādhū at a sermon; those who have washed the feet of the preachers; those who have invited the preacher and seated him on the pulpit; those who have attended on monks with meals, clothes etc."

"The following will behold Buddha Maitreya without doubt,: those who have honoured the saṅgha with āmisadāna and dharmadāna; those who have attended on mother or father or senior family members; those who have given rice at various times, on poya days and on special occasions; those who have performed

the ten meritorious deeds; those who have built residences for monks or shrine rooms; those who have fixed the eyes on Buddha statues or those who have copied manuscripts of sermons."

"Those gods and humans who have committed meritorious deeds with the aspiration to be born during the time of Maitreya will see him. Such gods and humans will listen to the Law preached by Buddha Maitreya and attain to mārgaphala. Those who cannot attain to mārgaphala will be born in the heaven. Therefore, O wise men, do follow moral precepts such as pañcaśīla, daśaśīla, and koṭisaṃvaraśīla and practise celibacy."

"Further those who have offered even a single handful of flowers, a single lamp or a single lump of rice with the intention of seeing the Buddha Maitreya will certainly see him, and so will even those who have shared the merits gained by others".¹

The above references indicate how the religious aspirations connected with the belief in Maitreya were entirely taken over by the bhakti cult. The future

1. S. Anāg., pp.178,179.

Buddha Maitreya has emerged as a saviour of mankind, a role assumed by Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas. Mere offering of a single flower, a single lump of rice or mere transference of merit acquired by others (pin anumodanā), is sufficient to attain nirvāṇa. As we know, this belief is against the karma theory of the Theravāda. It is the spirit of the Mahāyāna that is reflected in the above passages.

The beginning of this spirit in Buddhist literature is to be seen in works such as the Mahāvastu. The worship of the Buddha and of his relics ensured the attainment of nirvāṇa.

"Verily, he who, turning his thoughts to enlightenment, makes a garland of flowers and places it on a tope, is not destroyed.

For when he passes hence and dies, he goes to the Trāyastriṃśa devas, and there speedily obtains a brilliant bejewelled mansion..."¹

The culmination of the cult of Maitreya as reflected in Sinhalese works could be seen in sayings like the

1. Mhvu., tr. Vol.II, p.331.

following in the Sinhala Anāgatavamsaya where the emphasis is more on faith than on spiritual development.

"All beings should show cittaprasāda towards such great Bodhisattvas and make an effort to release themselves from the sorrow of samsāra".¹

Here Maitreya is transformed into a saviour like Amitābha (Amitāyus) or Avalokiteśvara who brings salvation to beings at the mere mention or thought of their names.

Of the Buddha Amitābha, it is said:

"If there be a good man or a good woman, who on hearing of Buddha Amitāyus, keeps his name (in mind) with thoughts undisturbed for one day, two days, three days, four days, five days, six days or seven days, that person when about to die (will see) Buddha Amitāyus accompanied by his holy host appear before him; and immediately after his death, he with his mind undisturbed, can be born into the Sukhāvatī land of Buddha Amitāyus."²

1. S.Anāgv., p.58

2. Buddha-bhāṣita Amitāyuh-sūtra, (The smaller Sukhāvatī Vyūha), tr. from the Chinese version of Kumārajīva by Nishu Utsuki, Kyoto, 1924. p.13

Mere hearing or thinking of Avalokiteśvara brings salvation.

"Hearing, seeing, regularly and constantly thinking will infallibly destroy all suffering, (mundane) existence and grief of living beings here on earth."¹

The Sinhalese writers were also interested in the fates of those who will be deprived of the opportunity of seeing Maitreya. Thus we read:

"Those who will not see Maitreya are the following:- those beings born in the hell Avīcimahā after committing the five great sins, namely matricide, patricide, murder of an arhat; spilling the blood of a Buddha and causing schism in the saṅgha; those holding false views such as that of the non-existence of this world, of the world after, of karma, of karmaphala, of mother, of father and of the effect of meritorious deeds; those beings who abuse noble beings; beings born in hells, or in animal, preta and asura worlds; beings born in formless states and unconscious states; those beings whose senses are deformed; those beings born in distant places;

1. Sdmp. tr. p.413.

beings such as niganthas; beings who have appropriated things belonging to the Buddha, dharma and saṅgha."¹

In fact the main purpose of the composition of the Sinhala Anāgatavamsaya, as stated in the work, is to help the people who are desirous of seeing Maitreya, by making available to them the story of Maitreya in Sinhalese.² The work serves as a handbook which guides the devotee in the attainment of the ultimate end, namely nirvāṇa on listening to the Law expounded by Buddha Maitreya.

The Sinhalese works have given emphasis to the idea that it is during the time of Buddha Maitreya that one may attain nirvāṇa. Passages similar to the following are found in many Sinhalese works:

"... performing the tenfold meritorious deeds, one should make an attempt to attain nirvāṇa by achieving the three-fold bliss, divine, human and nirvāṇic, having been born in either of the universally honoured royal or Brahman clans endowed

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1. S.Anāgv., p.178. The list of the two categories of beings, those who will see Maitreya and who will not, is quite similar in other Sinhalese works referred to above.
 2. S.Anāgv., pp.185-186.

with abundance of all articles for use and enjoyment in the kingdom of Ketumatī, having seen the Buddha Maitreya and listened to the Law and having attended upon him with four requisites of donation, in accordance with the merits accumulated with diligence according to one's ability."¹

Invariably the Ceylonese writers who expressed the wish for Buddhahood declared that they would receive vivarana from Buddha Maitreya.

The author of the Pali poem Jinālaṅkāra attributed to the twelfth century² aspires to attain Buddhahood after receiving vivarana from Metteyya.

"Metteyyanātham upasaṅkamitvā
Tassattabhāvam abhipūjayitvā
Laddhāna veyyākaraṇam anūnam
Buddho ayaṃ hessati'nāgatesu"³

The author of the Saddharmālaṅkāraya states:-

"Being possessed of the eight-fold qualities I will receive vivarana during the time of Maitreya, perfect the ten pāramitās ... attain Buddhahood and

1. Sdlk., p.768

2. PLC., p.111

3. Jinālaṅkāra, ed. Pandita Rākava Pālita, Matara, 1955, v.267

enable the beings suffering in samsāra to attain nirvāṇa."¹

The author of the Sinhala Anāgatavamsaya receives vivarana from Buddha Maitreya and all the succeeding Buddhas.

"I will enter the Order before Buddha Maitreya attains parinirvāṇa; and being possessed of virtues such as śīla and samādhi and eight requirements such as human birth etc. I will receive vivarana from Buddha Maitreya ... and also receive vivarana from all the Buddhas following Maitreya ... fulfil the ten pāramitās ... and attain the perfect enlightenment ..."²

The wish of the author of the Saddharmaratnākaraya was also to receive the first vivarana from Maitreya.

"... After receiving the first vivarana from Buddha Maitreya, may I fulfil the Buddhakāra-kadharmas, attain Omniscience, and then contribute to the welfare of the entire world by donating amṛtamahā-nirvāṇa to the people."³

1. Sdlk., p.736.

2. S.Anāgv., p.184.

3. Srtnk., p.76.

The influence of the cult of Maitreya remains active in Ceylon up to this day. The most typical and popular wish (prārthanā) made by Buddhists after performing a meritorious deed is to be born during the time of Maitreya and attain arhatship under his guidance. The members of the saṅgha, at the summing up of a meritorious deed done by the laity utter (in Sinhalese) the following well-wishing words (anumodanā), "May you with the help of this meritorious deed, enjoy human and divine bliss in future lives till you are reborn in the time of Buddha Maitreya and then attain nirvāṇa." In certain parts of Ceylon, there is a practice of concluding a sermon with the praise of Maitreya (Maitrīvarṇanāva) which includes passages listing the types of people who will and who will not behold Buddha Maitreya. The Anāgatavaṃsadesanā in full is sometimes preached at the conclusion of an all night preaching session.

As mentioned before, the idea that one may attain nirvāṇa during the time of Maitreya seems to have been perpetuated by Sinhalese works of the thirteenth century. The Pali canon makes no mention of this idea nor does even the Buddhavaṃsa. It was the Pali Anāgatavaṃsa that

introduced this concept and it was duly followed by Sinhalese writers. (However, the idea was known during the fifth century, in the Visuddhimagga. It is not certain whether or not the Pali Anāgatavamsa was written before the time of Visuddhimagga.¹

The notion of the attainment of nirvāṇa during Maitreya's time helped the saṅgha and the laity to view the whole issue of attaining nirvāṇa in a more positive light. In other words, people would not be discouraged from their aspirations on realizing that they had not accumulated sufficient merit to reach the goal in this birth. They could continue to do good in the hope of achieving it some time in the remote future, i.e. when Maitreya arrives.

From this follows that until the time this type of cult of Maitreya became finally entrenched, the attainment of nirvāṇa was a vague and an abstract concept. This cult of Maitreya put the concept of nirvāṇa in a more concrete and positive framework. It was rendered tangible in that one came to know the precise location and the precise time of the attainment of nirvāṇa. That place

1. Winternitz., op.cit., Eng.Trans. p.221, n.1.

would be Ketumatī and the time would be after the appearance of Maitreya. Man's life span would then extend to 80,000 years during which enough merit could be accumulated.

On the other hand, the cult of Maitreya also introduced a negative ideal; the fact that one can attain nirvāṇa only during Maitreya's time postpones the attainment of the goal to a very remote future. This ideal persists to the present day in that the Buddhists believe that no individual can attain nirvāṇa, however much he acquires merit, until Maitreya appears. In popular belief, the last man to achieve his arhatship was thera Maliyadeva who lived during the time of Duṭṭha-gāmaṇī.

We have observed in this chapter how the cult of Maitreya developed in the Pali Anāgata-vamsa was pursued with great zeal by the Sinhalese writers. Although the belief in Maitreya and the basic information connected with his life were drawn from the Pali canon, the development of the idea into a cult was inspired by the Mahāyāna. The Pali Anāgata-vamsa ostensibly laid much stress on the concept of saddhā (śraddhā) or bhatti (bhakti) while relegating to the background the concept

of paññā. As we know, paññā was more strongly emphasized in the early Buddhist literature. We may remember here that the evolution of the Bodhisattva doctrine of the Mahāyāna was an outcome of the concept of bhakti and of the idealization of the Buddha, rather than adherence to the intellectual factor represented by prajñā.

Other Future Buddhas

As has been shown above, the future Buddha Maitreya assumed the role of a Buddhist messiah. This messianic approach was not limited to Maitreya even in the Pali tradition as reflected in a Pali work called Dasabodhisattuppattikathā.¹ This work which probably belongs to the fifteenth century² refers to the pāramitās performed by ten future Buddhas headed by Maitreya.³ The chances

1. Published by D.R.Perera, Aṃbatāna, Ceylon, 1926.

2. Cf. Dasabodhisattuppattikathā, the birth-stories of the ten Bodhisattas, ed. H.Saddhātissa, PTS, London, 1974 forthcoming. I am indebted to Rev.Saddhātissa who kindly lent me the manuscript of this work. The ensuing discussion is based largely on this manuscript as well as on his excellent introduction.

3. A Thai inscription of 1361 A.D. written in Pali in connection with the arrival of a Ceylonese Saṅgharāja in Thailand refers to "ten future Buddhas such as Ariyametteyya". Cf. BEFEO., 17, p.30 Also see p. 394. It is probable that the legend of the ten future Buddhas was known in Ceylon in and before the fourteenth century.

of attaining the ultimate goal have been further enhanced by the fact that, as stated in the work, those beings who miss the attainment of nirvāṇa during Maitreya's time may attain it during the period of the succeeding Buddha; if one misses that too, opportunities will repeat themselves during the next and following periods. The ten chapters devoted to the past births of the ten Buddhas conclude in a similar vein incorporating this positive ideal. We quote here the last paragraph of the fourth chapter of the Dasabodhisattuppattikathā where the Buddha Gotama is said to have made the following statement.

"Sabbe sattā mama sāsane aggadhammaṃ sace na labhanti, Metteyyassa sāsane pi alabhantā Rāma Sammāsambuddhassa c'eva Dhammarāja- Sammāsambuddhassa ca no ce aggadhammaṃ labhissanti, Dhammasāmi-Sammāsambuddhaṃ passituṃ labheyyun ti."

The names of the ten future Buddhas according to the Dasabodhisattuppattikathā are as follows, Metteyya, Rāma, Dhammarāja, Dhammasāmi, Nārada, Raṃsimuni, Devadeva, Narasiṃha, Tissa, and Sumaṅgala. A certain manuscript of the Pali Anāgatavaṃsa as cited by Minayeff¹ contains a

1. JPTS, 1886, p.37.

verse that refers to ten future Buddhas identical in name and order in which they are cited, to those in the Dasabodhisattuppattikathā.

The stories of the ten Bodhisattvas have been placed in the mouth of the Buddha Gotama in the same manner as in the suttas in the Pali canon, beginning with the words evaṃ me sutam, the style followed by the post-canonical works as well as the Mahāyāna sūtras.

The story of Metteyya in the Dasabodhisattuppattikathā differs to a great extent from that given in the Pali Anāgatavaṃsa. After a description of the fabulous physique of Metteyya and the rays emanating from his body, follows the narration of a past birth during which the perfection of pāramitās was exceedingly conspicuous (atīviya pākāṭā).

In this particular birth, Metteyya was born in the Kuru country in the city of Indapatta where he became the emperor Saṅkha. Once when Saṅkha heard of the Buddha Sirimata from a sāmaṇera (novice), the king being overwhelmed with joy, offered the kingdom to the sāmaṇera and rushed to see the Buddha. He underwent much suffering by walking sixteen yojanas to reach the place

where the Buddha lived; being unable to walk with his bleeding feet, he went on his knees, palms and chest. The Buddha Sirimata knowing that Saṅkha was a future Buddha, created a chariot to fetch him. The overjoyed Saṅkha listened to a discourse on nibbāna and as an offering to the dhamma he severed his neck with his nails, with the aspiration to attain sabbaññutajñāna. Here as the text states "sīsadānaṃ paramatthapāramī nāma ahosi jīvitapariccāgo ca". The story is concluded by saying that Saṅkha will become Buddha Metteyya due to the offering of his head, and that the radiance emanating from his body will spread twenty five yojanas day and night due to the merit acquired by going on his bleeding feet and legs.

An outstanding feature in the stories of the Dasabodhisattuppattikathā is the emphasis given to acts of self-immolation. We may remember here, that this course of action, as a way of honouring the Buddha and perfecting pāramitās, is very much extolled in the Mahāyāna works such as the Saddharmapundarīka and the Sukhāvatīvyūha.

The Saddharmapundarīka contains an episode of the future Buddha Bhaiṣajyarājaguru who wrapped himself in

divine cloth, bathed in oil and burnt himself.¹ A story very similar to this occurs in the Dasabodhisattuppat-tikathā where a youth, Nārada by name, who was to become Buddha Rāmarāja resolved to honour the Buddha in a similar fashion. On seeing the Buddha Kassapa, he resolved, "A Buddha is a rare occurrence. What is the use of this disgusting life? It is proper for me to sacrifice this life for the sake of Buddhahood." Thereupon he wrapped himself in cloth soaked in scented oil and set fire to the cloth with a torch.

It is noteworthy that all the ten Boddhisattvas either sacrificed their lives or made some kind of similar offering to the Buddha, in order to attain Buddhahood, which undoubtedly points to a developed stage of the bhakti ideal.

Among the ten future Buddhas are certain individuals alluded to in the Pali canon, namely King Pasenadi, Brahmans called Caṅkī, Subha and Todeyya, elephants by the names of Pārileyya and Nālāgiri and the asura named Rāhu. However, the life stories and the episodes associated with these individuals differ entirely from those

1. Sdmp., tr. pp.379,380.

in the Pali canon. We have yet to come across any other instance where these stories are referred to either in the Pali canon, post-canonical or Sinhalese literature.

It can be safely concluded that the Dasabodhisattupattikathā was a late work of a time when the impact of the theory of countless Bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna was becoming greatly felt in Ceylon. The idea of the ten Bodhisattvas as well as the approach and the theme in the stories seem a deliberate and calculated attempt of the Theravādins to win back the masses by offering them something similar to that found in the Mahāyāna. The introduction to the Dasabodhisattupattikathā which we quote below testifies to our conclusion.

"Once while residing in Pubbārāma known as the Migāramātupāsāda built by Visākhā, the Exalted One narrated the birth stories of the ten Bodhisattvas in the future to the Elder Sāriputta who asked about the Elder Ajita. On a certain day, Sāriputta went into the presence of the Exalted One, saluted him and sat on one side. Sāriputta said to the Exalted One, 'Venerable Sir, you have predicted that the Elder Ajita will become Buddha Metteyya in the future

in this same bhaddakalpa. Will there also appear in the future aeons numerous other Buddhas? I ask this question after taking into consideration the opinion of gods and men on these points.

Thus the Buddha replied, 'Certainly Sāriputta, there have been endless numbers (anantāparimāṇa) of good people (sappurisā) who have been born in the world, perfected the pāramitās, attained Buddhahood, accomplished the duty of a Buddha (buddhakicca) and passed away. In the future too, there will be endless numbers of courageous people with excessive determination who will perfect the pāramitās, enjoy the pleasures of the sensual world and the bliss of the Brahmaworld, attain Buddhahood, accomplish the duty of a Buddha and pass away. It is not possible, Sāriputta, for me to count the number of Buddhas in the future. (Na kho taṃ Sāriputta anāgate pi Buddha-gaṇanāya parimāṇaṃ gaṇhāmi). Yet, Sāriputta, [in the first place] there will be ten Buddhas who will appear in succession.' Having said this, the Buddha remained silent. Then Sāriputta got up from his seat in salutation to the Buddha and requested him, 'It is certainly good if the Buddha expounds the

dhamma regarding the ten Buddhas in the fourfold assembly'".

The idea of the ten Bodhisattvas as present in this isolated Pali work is not reflected in any Sinhalese work known to me. However there are references to innumerable numbers of Buddhas in Sinhalese works of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In this connection, we should also mention that there were occasional references to innumerable numbers of Buddhas in some later Pali works. The Apadānatthakathā refers to anekasahassasaṅkhā buddhā¹, tiṃsapāramī sampunnā dhammarājā asaṅkhyayā.²

Here we quote some examples of the expressions used by Sinhalese writers when speaking of innumerable numbers of Buddhas³, of both of future and past.

The Pūjāvaliya reads:

"... where innumerable and infinite numbers of Buddhas sat to partake of their meals ... (anantāpariyantavū budun vādahiṇḍa vālaṇḍū sthānayehi)⁴

1. Apadānatthakathā, Hevāvitāraṇa edition, I.p.79.

2. Ibid., I.p.84. Here dhammarājā means Buddhas as given in the same text, dhammarājā itthambhutā buddhā (p.86).

3. Also see p.189 for the precise number of Buddhas given in connection with pranidhāna.

4. Pjv., p.157.

"... in the Orders of innumerable and infinite numbers of Buddhas ... (anantāpariyantavū budunge śāsanavala)¹

"... of the Bodhi trees of innumerable and infinite numbers of Buddhas ... (anantāpariyantavū budunge bodhivala)²

The Anāgatavamsaya speaks of multiple Buddhas in the following manner.

"... when crores and lakhs of Omniscient Ones (Kelalaksaganan sarvajñavarayan) have been born in this manner in order to help all beings cross over the ocean of samsāra and attain nirvāṇa".³

The author of the Anāgatavamsaya himself will see many more future Buddhas after Maitreya.

"... May I receive vivarana from Maitreya and then from all the Buddhas following Maitreya..."⁴

The Saddharmālaṅkāraya reads:

"... a certain Brahmarāja ... while surveying

1. Ibid., p.429.

2. Ibid., p.656.

3. S.Anāgv., p.147.

4. Ibid., p.185.

the world ... beheld many thousands of Bodhisattvas (noyek dahas gaṇan bodhisattvavarayan) who were perfecting pāramitās urged by the aspiration for Buddhahood like lotus buds awaiting the rays of the sun so that they may open up ..."¹

"... having aspired to Buddhahood after attending on many hundreds of Omniscient Ones (noyek siyagaṇan sarvajñavarayan) by way of offering alms etc."²

"... innumerable and infinite numbers of Omniscient Ones (anantāpariyanta sarvajñayan) who attained Enlightenment in the past..."³

Thus it is to be seen that Mahāyāna ideas stimulated the growth of the cult of Maitreya and the development of the concept of multiple Buddhas.

1. Sdlk., p.40

2. Ibid., p.50

3. Ibid., p.386

Chapter V

Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas and Ceylon Gods

The worship of various divinities has existed in Ceylon from pre-Buddhistic times.¹ Many of the gods that came to be worshipped through the ages often changed their identity; some originally local gods later transformed into Buddhist or Hindu gods. In this process of metamorphosis, the influence of Mahāyāna plays an important role; often the existing deities were identified with Mahāyāna gods.

In this chapter, we will explore the instances where a possible influence of Mahāyāna on the gods of Ceylon can be established. Under the category of Mahāyāna deities we will also include those Mahāyāna gods who were worshipped without being subject to a process of identification with any local gods.

Avalokiteśvara in Ceylon - God Nātha.

Avalokiteśvara is the best known of the numerous

1. S. Paranavitana, 'Pre-Buddhist religious beliefs in Ceylon', JRASC.B., Vol. XXXI, 1929, pp. 302-328.

Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas. He is referred to by many epithets; 'Mahākaruṇā', i.e. the great compassionate one, 'Lokaṇātha', or 'Lokēśvara', or 'Lokēśa', i.e. the Lord of the world, Samantamukha, i.e. he who looks every way or who is omnipresent, Padmapāṇi, i.e. lotus handed. From the time of the disappearance of the Buddha Gautama up to the appearance of the future Buddha Maitreya at the end of the present Bhadrakalpa, Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara acts like a Mānuṣī Buddha looking after the spiritual welfare of the people and continuing the work of propagation of Buddhism.¹

Avalokiteśvara is unknown in the Pali canon and the later Pali literature. He is not mentioned by name in the earlier Buddhist Sanskrit works, such as the Divyāvadāna, Lalitavistara, Jātakamālā and works of Aśvaghoṣa. The Lalitavistara (221 A.D.) however does contain a reference to Mahākaruṇā, presumably meaning Avalokiteśvara.

A well developed stage of the character of Avalokiteśvara is represented in the Saddharmapundarīka. In its 24th chapter which is devoted to Avalokiteśvara,

1. A. Getty, op.cit., p.55. Cf. Kāraṇḍavyūha, ed. S. Samasrami, Calcutta, 1873.

the Buddha praises Avalokitesvara for the blessings the latter bestows on his devotees. Here he assumes the role of the Universal Saviour, omnipresent and efficacious against all conceivable calamities, disasters of all kinds, shipwreck, execution, violence and theft. The mere mention of his name saves beings from troubles and brings salvation.

"Think, O think with tranquil mood of Avalokiteśvara, that pure being; he is a protector, a refuge, a recourse in death, disaster, and calamity.

He who possesses the perfection of all virtues, and beholds all beings with compassion and benevolence, he, an ocean of virtues, Virtue itself, he, Avalokiteśvara, is worthy of adoration.

He, so compassionate for the world, shall once become a Buddha, destroying all dangers and sorrows; I humbly bow to Avalokiteśvara.

In quarrel, dispute, war, battle, in any great danger one has to think of Avalokiteśvara, who shall quell the wicked troop of foes.

If a woman is desirous of male offspring ... she shall get a son, nice, handsome and beautiful... If a woman is desirous of getting a daughter, a nice handsome, beautiful girl shall be born to her ..."¹

1. Sāmp., tr. pp.409-417.

This text asserts that the mention of his name is equal to the worship of innumerable Buddhas.

"...He who adores a number of Lord Buddhas equal to sixty-two times the sands of the river Ganges and cherishes their names, and he who adores the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara and cherishes his name, have an equal accumulation of pious merit..."¹

The Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra² extols Avalokiteśvara in all his glory and the proportions of his body see no bounds; eighty thousand niyutas of yojanas in height, the circumference of his face a hundred thousand yojanas etc. Thus the personality of Avalokiteśvara is seen increased in importance.

In the Kāraṇḍavyūha,³ Avalokiteśvara assumes forms of Buddhas or even Brahmanic gods and confers benefit on all beings. On his visit to Avīci, the suffering beings are relieved, on entering the world of pretas; ghosts are freed. He transformed himself into the form of a god of love and disciplined the rākṣasīs in Siṃhala (Ceylon) and established them on the good path. Avalokiteśvara has

1. Sdmp., tr. p.410.

2. SBE., XLIX.

3. P.18.

also assumed the form of a horse named Valāhaka to save some shipwrecked Indian merchants from the rāksasīs of Siṃhala.¹

As the theory of the Dhyāni Buddhas developed, he came to be known as the principal emanation from the Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha. With the development of Tāntrism, he began to assume 108 different forms and various means of propitiations (sādhana) are laid down.² Tārā became his consort.

Numerous sculptures of Avalokiteśvara found in Ceylon point to the existence of the cult of Avalokiteśvara from about the seventh century. The earliest of these images which is dated to the seventh or eighth century was discovered at Situlpavuva near the coast in South-eastern Ceylon.³ This six foot high image

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1. In an earlier form of the story the horse was Buddha in a previous birth but here Avalokiteśvara took his place and saved the chief merchant who was Buddha (Cf. E.J.Thomas op.cit., p.192, n.1.) This reflects the increase of Avalokiteśvara's importance and gradual supremacy over the Buddha.
 2. IBI., Appendix pp.394-431.
 3. ASCAR., 1934, p.20; D.T. Devendra, Buddha image and Ceylon, 1957, Plates XX and XXVI.

contains a figure of a Dhyāni Buddha in the headdress and is a very impressive piece of sculpture.

Two small bronzes of Avalokiteśvara, one in the collection of the Boston Museum¹ and the other in the Neville collection at the British Museum have been dated as of the eighth century. The rock sculpture in sunk relief at Vāligama in Southern Province popularly known as Kuṣṭarāja (king with a skin disease) represents a variant form of Avalokiteśvara with four small figures of the Dhyāni Buddha on the headdress² (according to textual evidence, Siṃhanāda Lokeśvara is the curer of all diseases³ and this probably explains the legend of healing associated with Kuṣṭarāja).

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1. JRAS, April, 1909, plate I, fig.1; A.K. Coomaraswamy, Bronzes of Ceylon, chiefly in the Colombo Museum, Colombo, 1914, fig.172, 173 and p.7; and the same author's History of Indian and Indonesian Art, New York, 1927, fig.297.
 2. S.Paranavitana, CJSG., II, pp.49-50; N. Mudiyanse, MMC., pp.39-41. However scholars are at variance regarding the identity of this image. J.E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw identifies this as Samantabhadra (Paranavitana Felicitation volume, pp.253-261). Also see below D.K. Dohanian identifies this as Mañjuśrī (op.cit., p.85)
 3. SBE., XLIX, p.48.

The image of Avalokiteśvara found among the colossal sculptures carved in relief on the face of an outcrop of rock at Buduruvagala near Vāllavāya in Ūva Province has been dated around 900 A.D.¹ Sculptures of Avalokiteśvara have also been found at Daṃbulla, Ambalantoṭa (Southern Province) and at Vāgiriya (Central Province). The images of Avalokiteśvara in Ceylon range in time from the seventh to the tenth centuries and are found in many parts of Ceylon thus testifying to the popularity enjoyed by Avalokiteśvara during this time.

The inscriptions and numerous literary works in Ceylon also reveal that Avalokiteśvara was an object of popular worship from about the seventh century in Ceylon. The first mention of this Bodhisattva occurs in the Tiriyāya rock inscription of the seventh century written in Sanskrit verses. The purpose of the inscription has been to extol the sanctity of the shrine of Girikaṇḍika built by the two merchants Trapassuka (or Tapassu) and Vallika (or Bhalluka) enshrining the hair relics presented to them by the Buddha. The inscription contains

1. D.K. Dohanian, op.cit., p.46.

invocations to the triad, the Buddha, Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuvāg (Mañjuśrī). The following is the relevant verse on Avalokiteśvara.

"Makuṭamaṇau kṛtasphuṭa-mahāmuniḥbimbadharo
nivasati yatra siddhasurakinnarapūjyatamaḥ
gurur avalokiteśvara iti prathito bhagavān
tad ahar ahar namāmi Girikaṇḍikacaitya¹ aham"²

"(I worship daily the Girikaṇḍikacaitya where dwells the Teacher, the Lord who is known as Avalokiteśvara who is the worthiest of honour by Siddhas, gods and Kinnaras and who bears in the diadem a shining image of the Great Sage - Buddha.)"

It is surprising, however to find that there is no mention of the name Avalokiteśvara in any Sinhalese literary or epigraphic work. There he appears with a different name, Lokeśvara Nātha or Nātha which is a

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1. The association of Girikaṇḍika caitya with Tapassu and Bhalluka is supported also by literary evidence. The Pūjāvaliya (p.198) says that Tapassu and Bhalluka enshrined the Buddha's hair relics in the Girikaṇḍika caitya.

There is another shrine called Girihaṇḍu at Ambalantota (Southern Province) which local tradition claims to be the repository of the hair relics offered to Tapassu nad Bhalluka.

2. EZ., IV, pp.314-316.

shortened form of Lokeśvara Nātha.¹ In poetic diction, Avalokiteśvara is in addition referred to as natiñdu (Sk. Nāthendra), and Natisuru (Sk. Nātheśvara), the Lord, the chief - which has a meaning identical with Lokeśvara Nātha. We will present evidence in the discussion below to support the identity of Nātha with Avalokiteśvara.²

The worship of Nātha is found mention in the inscription of Mahinda IV (956-972 A.D.) at Mihintale³ which gives a list of objects of worship found at the place as;

"... the relic house, the image house in which stands the auspicious and colossal stone image, the house of the Great Bodhi tree, the shrine of Nayiñda (Nayiñda isā), the house of the Goddess Miñināl (Miñināl devdūn gehi isā)."

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1. Lokeśvara is one of the best known epithets for Avalokiteśvara in Cambodia and Java, Charles Eliot, HB., III, p.123, n.3; also see below pp.405 ff.
 2. Early scholars speculated on incomplete evidence on Nātha as a Hindu god (G.P. Malalasekara, Pali Lit., p.250), as future Buddha Maitreya (A.K. Coomaraswamy, Med. Sin. Art, p.56), as a local guardian deity (W. Geiger, Mv., tr. Vol. I, p.74), K.D.P. Wickramasinghe suggested that Nātha could even be Indra or Sakra (The development of Sinhalese Literature in the 15th century. Ph.D. Thesis University of London, 1963).
 3. EZ., Vol. I, p.92.

De Z. Wickremasinghe suggested the word nāga or snake-king for nayin̄da in this inscription, taking it as a derivative of Sk. nāgendra. Parānavitana dismisses this view on the grounds that the worship of snake kings was never on par with that of Buddha, Bo tree and relics in Buddhist temples. Further, he pointed out that the word nayin̄da may be derived also from Sk. Nāthendra, meaning Avalokiteśvara. Parānavitana goes further and seeks to prove that the goddess Minināl mentioned in the inscription is Tārā, i.e. Avalokiteśvara's spouse. The word Manipadme in the Tibetan formula Om manipadme hūm has been proved as the vocative of the name manipadmā, another name of Tārā¹. One meaning of the word nāla is a lotus flower, and manināla or minināl may have been used locally in place of manipadmā which means Tārā. The fact that Avalokiteśvara (nayin̄da) and Tārā are mentioned together, further supports Parānavitana's identification of Nātha with Avalokiteśvara.

The next epigraphic reference to Nātha occurs in the fourteenth century. A fragmentary record² at Gaḍalādeniya

1. See below

2. EZ., IV, pp.103,104.

(1342 A.D.) in the central Province mentions that Bhuvanekabāhu IV caused to be made in the image house, the image of the Buddha, attended by Gods such as Śakra, Brahmā, Suyāma, Santuṣita, Nātha, Maitrī and two attendant images.

The Laṅkātilaka rock inscription of Bhuvanekabāhu IV (1344 A.D.), a record that contains a detailed account of the Laṅkātilaka shrine, also mentions the images of the Maitri Bodhisattva and the Lord Lokeśvara Nātha found in the lowest story of the image house (Maitrī Bodhisattvayan vahanset Lokeśvara Nāthayan vahanset)¹.

The Sagama rock inscription² of Bhuvanekabāhu V (1372-1408) records a donation to god Nātha of Senkadagala (Kandy) and the god of the nā tree for helping the two dignitaries, Alakeśvara and Devamantriśvara, to stabilize the affairs of the church and the state.

(Senkadagala nāthasāmīntat nāgasa deviyantat)

The two gods are said to have helped Alakeśvara and Devamantriśvara by appearing in a dream. This inscription suggests that Kandy was a centre of Nātha worship from

1. UCR., XVIII, Nos. 1 & 2, 1960, pp.5,7.

2. EZ., IV, pp. 308,309.

the fourteenth century, which remains true up to the present day.

The Pāpiliyāna inscription of Parākramabāhu VI (1412-1467 A.D.) contains the phrase, "To the two Lords Nātha and Maitrī" (Nātha Maitrī detānata)¹. The Saddharmaratnākaraya (fifteenth century) records that images of Nātha and Maitreya stood in the image house at Luṇugama².

The rock inscription at Vāgiri devāle (1415 A.D.) in Central Province records the donations of certain fields for the daily offerings to Lokeśvara Nātha.

(Vāgiri devālayehi lokeśvara nāthayan vahanseta)

The fact that the two images found at the devāle have been identified by Paranavitana as of Avalokiteśvara and Tārā³ affords further evidence for the identification of Lokeśvara Nātha with Avalokiteśvara. However, the headdress of this image shows no Dhyāni Buddha. The details of this image seem to agree with the description of Nātha at Doravaka in the Tisara Sandeśaya (1409-1415) which appears below. Evidence shown from the fact that

1. D.B.Jayatilaka, Katikavat Sangara, Kelaniya, 1955, p.44.

2. Srtmk., p.320.

3. JRAS., Vol.XXII, No.65, p.362.

the Vāgiriya rock inscription names the deity at Vāgiri as Lokeśvara Nātha and that the image found in the Vāgiri devāle agrees with the description of Nātha in the Tisara Sandeśaya further supports the identification of Nātha with Avalokiteśvara.

The following is the description in the Tisara Sandeśaya (Message of the swan) of Nātha at Doravaka, in the Kegalle district where his image stood side by side with that of the Buddha.

"His head resplendent with matted hair (jatā makuta) is like a rain cloud with a flash of lightning. The colour of the eye lashes surpasses that of the blue lily and the sapphire. What do the two hands like the trunks of white elephants compare with? They display the beauty of a pair of streams flowing down on either side of a white mountain. The rosary hanging down his body which resembles a lump of nectar, bears the splendour of a line of blue swans, in the celestial river, if at all there appeared one. The feet brightened with the rays of the nails provide the splendour of an evening cloud clustered with stars and dispel the pride of a dew-strewn lotus contracting due to the moon rays. Lord Nātha endowed with such characteristics stands radiant in the Buddha image house. Bow down to him with joy and pray him to grant your wish."¹

1. Tisara, v.128.

The fact that the image of Nātha referred to here was white in colour and had an elaborate jaṭāmakuta may be taken as more evidence for the identification of Nātha with Avalokiteśvara. (Avalokiteśvara was always white in colour except in some images of Nepal.)¹

Verse 129 in the Tisara Sandeśaya, which follows the verse on Nātha, is on Tārā and this can count as further evidence for Paranavitana's conclusion.

Though the poet does not state that Tārā was the spouse of Nātha, the fact that Tārā is mentioned immediately after Nātha and that the two images were in the same shrine, explains the relation between the two. Further Tārā is referred to as biso, the title by which the wives of gods were known in the Sinhalese literary works of this period. The spouse of Lokeśvara Nātha at Vāgiri devāle is also commonly called Biso bandara.²

At the Totāgamuva temple too, the image of Nātha had stood alongside with that of the Buddha in the same image house, as mentioned in the Kokila Sandeśaya

1. IBI., pp.42f.

2. Csoma de Körös's Grammar shows that in the Mūla Tantra, the word Tārā is used synonymously with wife or queen, like Devī amongst the Hindus. See A grammar of the Tibetan language in English, Calcutta, 1834, p.193

(message of the cuckoo) another message poem of the fifteenth century.¹

"Near the Buddha stands the beautiful image of natisuru, the Lord, the chief who possesses a glamorous body resembling the mount Kailāsa which is besmeared always with the rays of the moon, and who is awaiting to become a Buddha in future. Pay homage to him so that your wish will be granted."²

Toṭagamuva, in the Galle district was apparently the centre of the cult of Nātha³ in Ceylon during the fifteenth century. The celebrated poet and erudite scholar, Śrī Rāhula was the incumbent of the temple at Toṭagamuva which was the greatest seat of learning at the time. The importance given to the worship of Avalokiteśvara in this temple would have undoubtedly helped to spread the cult to other temples in the island.

The Girā Sandeśaya (message of the parrot), another message poem of the same period, too refers to the image

1. All the Sandeśa poems referred to here were written in the fifteenth century.

2. Kokila, v.80. In this poem the wish of the bird was to consolidate the power in Yāpāpaṭuna.

3. Images of Avalokiteśvara which appear to have been recently renovated are found at the Toṭagamuva devāle.

of Nātha at Toṭagamuva. Here the messenger is told to enter the image house, bow down to the Buddha and then to natiṇḍu, indicating the importance of Nātha second only to that of Buddha.

"Leave the place after seeing the Lord Nātha whose fame has spread throughout the world, who is continually perfecting the virtues of a Bodhisattva with the intention of leading to the city of nirvāṇa the innumerable beings, who wander about merged deep in the vast samsāra."¹

In fact, the purpose of writing the poem was to send a message to Śrī Rāhula to request Lord Nātha to provide protection to the king Parākramabāhu VI (1415-1467), the country and the religion.

"O friend! beseech the sage (Śrī Rāhula) to pray to Lord Nātha to protect the whole of Śrī Laṅkā up to the ocean around, by surveying it compassionately with his divine eyes, immaculate as the moon beams; to dispel all dangers such as enemies, poison, disease and evil spirits; to display to the world his Bodhisattva nature; to bestow for ever victory and prosperity on the king."²

In the next verse, Nātha is eulogised as the great

1. Girā, v.221.

2. Ibid., v.251.

protector of the Buddhist church for 5000 years.

"The Buddha came over to Ceylon on three occasions from the Jambudvīpa and established the order with the help of His divine eye, after driving the yakṣas away, so that there will be no obstruction in the future. Do request the sage once again to pay to Lord Nātha who is resplendent with fame like the moon, to protect gladly the Buddhist order for ever, so that it may flourish for 5000 years - the order whose appearance brought joy equally to the sura and asura worlds."¹

The Girā Sandeśaya² affords further evidence for the high place of honour occupied by Nātha in the temple of Toṭagamuva. The writer of the Girā Sandeśaya sees the violent waves of the ocean breaking on the shore at Toṭagamuva as if they are complaining to Lord Nātha of Viṣṇu's stealing of the most precious jewel of the ocean, namely the kaustubha jewel. It can be inferred from this description that at the time the lord Nātha was held in higher esteem than Viṣṇu.

The Paravi Sandeśaya composed by Śrī Rāhula himself also refers to Nātha at Toṭagamuva. He is alluded to as

1. Ibid., v.251.

2. Ibid., v.198

¹
divayurusiya nātadevi (God Nātha, the kinsman of the sun.)

In another poetical work by Śrī Rāhula, the Kāvya-śekharaya, the Lord Nātha is extolled in the following manner.

"Celebrated in the world, with lustre and fame, exhibiting the splendour of the sun, and the moon, the Lord Nātha (natiñdu) who will become a Buddha in the future - may he be victorious for ever!"²

The spiritual characteristics of Nātha as depicted in the above quotations from Sandeśa poems well agree with those attributed to Avalokiteśvara in the Mahāyāna works, discussed above. Nātha of Ceylon, as we have seen, grants wishes of devotees, bestows riches, dispels dangers from enemies, poison, evil spirits etc. He also protects the king and the country and looks after the Buddhist religion for 5000 years. He is in addition regarded as a future Buddha and is described as possessing a white body.

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1. It is probable that this is only a metaphor to convey the lustre of the god. Ādiccabandhu which gives the same meaning as divayurusiya is an epithet of the Buddha.
 2. Kāvyaśekharaya, canto XV, v.24.

The Vṛttaratnākara-pañjikā¹, a fifteenth century Sanskrit commentary on Vṛttaratnākara², written in Ceylon contains verses in praise of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.³

The commentator was a Brahman named Rāmacandra Bhāratī from Bengal who came to Ceylon and studied under Śrī Rāhula in the Vijayabāhu pirivena. It is said that king Parākramabāhu VI conferred on him the title 'Bauddhāgama cakravartin' in appreciation of his work, the Bhaktiśataka or Bauddhaśataka, an eulogy of the Buddha in a hundred ślokas.

A translation of the four ślokas on Avalokiteśvara is quoted below:

"May Avalokiteśvara, the refuge of the virtuous and the ocean of compassion, remove my suffering - he who endeavours, day and night to deliver beings plunged in the midst of the great sea of saṃsāra.

"May this Avalokita, who has compassion for the lowly and the poor folk, protect thee - Avalokiteśvara by whose lustre, equal to the radiance

1. B.C.Law memorial volume, Part II, Poona, 1946.

2. A well known work on Sanskrit prosody by Kedārabhaṭṭa.

3. This is the second instance of Avalokiteśvara being referred to by the name Avalokiteśvara, the first one being the Tiriyāya inscription already cited. It is interesting to note that the god is referred to by the name Avalokiteśvara only in these two records where the language was Sanskrit.

of millions of autumnal moons, the three worlds appeared like the ocean of Milk.

"I now worship Avalokiteśvara, the Lord of prosperity, who is as beautiful as the autumnal moon, or the jasmine flower or snow, or the garland of pearls, or the lance or quick silver, who holds in his hands a rosary and a jewel lotus, who wishes well to the whole world, who has, as his crown, a figure of the conqueror (i.e. Buddha) who is the foremost teacher, and who is adorned with ornaments like the jatāmakuta etc.

"The all knowing and the incomparable Lord Avalokiteśvara, assuming that this action affords protection to the world, daily removes fear; hence having known that he is compassionate towards the lowly and the poor, I go for refuge to that Lord, who is the abode of my rejoicing, and who is indeed the foremost among Bodhisattvas. May you and all people who desire heaven and final beautitude go at once for the accomplishment of your aims to that Teacher. May it be well."

The Rūpāvaliya,¹ a Sanskrit work on iconometry written in Ceylon around the eleventh century and available only in manuscript contains a description of Natha as possessing physical as well as spiritual characteristics very similar to those of Avalokiteśvara.

1. See A.K. Cocmaraswamy, Med.Sin.Art., p.112

"With a beautiful lotus in the hand while in colour like the lily flower and camphor, with crest decked with heavenly ornaments, with a figure of a Buddha on the head, compassionate to the low and the desperate, the god Nātha, the giver of wisdom who deserves worship - may he be victorious!"¹

Eight different forms of Nātha² are described in this manuscript, viz., Śiva Nātha, Brahma Nātha, Viṣṇu Nātha, Gaurī Nātha, Matsyendra Nātha, Bhadra Nātha, Bauddha Nātha and Gaṇa Nātha. The mention of eight forms of Nātha, is a clear instance where an originally Mahāyāna god took a local form and further absorbed members of the Hindu pantheon in harmony with Buddhist beliefs.³

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1. CJSG., II, p.60. Parānavitana has attributed this verse and the description of the eight forms of Nātha to another Sanskrit work on iconometry entitled Śāriputraprakaraṇa, also apparently written in Ceylon about the same time. It appears, however, that the reference to the Śāriputraprakaraṇa is out of place because no such description is found in any other manuscript but the Rūpāvaliya.
 2. In the Jinapañjariya, a paritta chanted in Ceylon even today, occur the words etthantare aṭṭhanāthā bhavanti.
 3. CJSG., II, pp.6off.

A curious aspect of the worship of Nātha as it developed through the centuries¹ was that Nātha was also identified with future Buddha Maitreya. In a manuscript of a ballad collected by Hugh Nevill, named Nāthadevi-puvata, Nātha is invoked to descend to a flower throne from Tuṣita heaven.² He is described as the future Buddha Maitreya who offered himself as prey to a lioness with a view to become a Buddha. Hugh Nevill dates this to the sixteenth century and surmises that the author was from Toṭagamuva. The same information on his future Buddhahood and his offering himself to a lioness is found in the Satara-devāle-devipuvata.³ (Here he is described as blue of body.)

This tendency to identify Nātha with the Bodhisattva Maitreya can be traced to two main reasons, namely, Nātha's future Buddhahood and the whiteness of his body as represented in literary sources. By this time Nātha's Mahāyāna origin is forgotten and so is Maitreya's future

1. Vadankavipota, Pādeniya-Sinduva and Ämbākke Varnanāva are three works of the late Kandy period which contain invocations to Nātha.

2. Ceylon national museums manuscript series, Vol.I, p.115.

3. British Museum Manuscript, Or. 6615 (435)

Buddhahood.¹

We have seen in the foregoing pages many instances where Nātha and Maitrī were mentioned together, which provide ample evidence for the existence of two distinct personages at least up to the fifteenth century.

The worship of Avalokiteśvara has come down to the present day though apparently it has lost the relative importance it occupied in the fifteenth century. The best known centre of worship is the Nātha devāle at Kandy,² situated in the vicinity of the famous temple of the Tooth. The reference to this devāle, in the Sagama inscription of the fourteenth century, referred to above, shows that this temple continued to remain a centre of the cult of Nātha. Paranavitana points out that the Nātha devale is the only building in Kandy entirely built of stone and also that it is the oldest historical building existing in Kandy today.

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1. It is interesting to note an instance where Maitreya is invoked as a deity together with Nātha to obtain rain during the reign of Parākramabāhu II:

"Nātha Metteyya devādi devānam ca mahiddhinam" Cy., 87.3.

2. This is one of the four devāles of Kandy, the others being Pattini devāle (the shrine of the goddess of chastity) Mahāviṣṇu devāle and the Kataragama devāle (shrine of Skandakumāra).

The Nātha devale occupied an important place during the time of Kandyan kings, being the venue of the ceremony of the inauguration of kings. Pridham¹ has given a description of the ceremony; the main purpose of the ceremony was choosing a name for the king and putting on the regal sword. The astrologers were entrusted individually with the task of choosing a fortunate name, inscribing it on a gold plate set with precious jewels and depositing it in the Nātha devale. At the auspicious time, the prince went in ceremony to the Mahā Viṣṇu devāle and made offerings to the god. Then he proceeded to the Nātha devāle, likewise made offerings to the god, selected the name he liked best and announced it. Then the gold plate with the name, made in the form of a nalalpata (ornament for forehead) was tied round the prince's forehead. Thereafter, the regal sword was put on to the prince. The prince, now king, dipped his fingers in sandalwood powder presented by the kapurāla (lay priest) and touched the sword. Paranavitana² surmises that the king's receiving of the regal name and sword at the hands of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara

1. Ceylon and its Dependencies, Vol. X, p.342.

2. CJSG., II, p.58 f.

was an ancient custom as suggested by the epithet 'Bodhisattvāvatāra' applied to the later kings.

There was another ceremony¹ held in Nātha devale that throws some light on another aspect of the God Avalokiteśvara. During the new year celebrations, a thousand pots of juices of herbs were prepared by the royal physicians and were sent to the palace for ceremonial distribution to other temples. This shows that Nātha was considered a God of healing, one form of Avalokiteśvara.

This is further supported by references to this property of Avalokiteśvara in two Nepalese manuscripts.² These manuscripts written in Bengali script of the eleventh century contain miniature paintings of Mahāyāna deities with inscriptions giving their names and titles. Among the deities from Ceylon mentioned here are the Siṅhaladvīpe Ārogyaśālā Lokeśvaraḥ. (Lokeśvara [i.e. Avalokiteśvara] of the hospital in Ceylon) and Siṅhaladvīpe Ārogyaśālā Lokanāthaḥ (the Lokanātha [i.e. Avalokiteśvara] of the hospital in Ceylon). The Bodhisattva in

1. Ibid., p.168.

2. Cambridge University Library, No., Add 1643. See also EIB., pt.I, p.193,212.

both the paintings is white in colour and is accompanied by two female companions, one Tārā, the other Marīcī.

The evidence presented above provides ample evidence for the growth of the cult of Avalokiteśvara in Ceylon from about the seventh century. The evidence also suggests that this cult had become strongly integrated with accepted religious practices in Ceylon, namely those of Ceylon Buddhism. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Nātha had lost his Mahāyāna character as a Bodhisattva and was worshipped as purely a local god in a way similar to the worship of Upulvan, Saman etc. Although the worship of Nātha persisted in later times, it lost the important position it had occupied in the fifteenth century.

Tārā.

With Tāntrism came Tārā into Buddhism; she became the spouse of Avalokiteśvara. The presence of several images of Tārā dating from the seventh to the twelfth centuries reveals that she had established herself in the Mahāyāna pantheon in India by this time.¹

1. Hsüan-tsang came across a number images of Tārā in India in the seventh century. See BEKW., Vol. II, p. 103.

The meaning of the Sanskrit name Tārā given by G. de Blonay as derived from the root 'tar' to cross was probably from the idea that she helps to cross the ocean of existence.¹ Blonay adds that Tārā was worshipped among sea travellers as a goddess of navigation who saved her devotees from the dangers of the ocean and who rendered guidance to them.

Tārā gained greater significance and popularity in Tibet than anywhere else. She is one deity who can be approached directly by the devotees in Tibet. Most of the other deities have to be prayed for with the aid of a Lama who acts as a mediator. Tārā's readiness to help and the easy approachableness account for her popularity in Tibet. The Lamas of Tibet regarded all good woman as incarnations of Tārā. The two wives of the first Buddhist king of Tibet Sroṅ-btsan-sgam-po were believed to be incarnations of Tārā; the Chinese princess Wen-ch'eng as the incarnation of the white Tārā and the Nepalese princess Bribsum as that of the green Tārā.²

1. Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire de la déesse bouddhique Tārā, Paris, 1895, pp.48f.,62; Also see EIB., II,p.78.

2. E.Schlagintweit, Buddhism in Tibet, Leipzig., London, 1863, p.66

The earliest mention of Tārā in Ceylon occurs in the inscriptions on copper plaques found at the Vijayārāma monastery dated ninth century A.D. Of the thirteen plaques, the last two, i.e. the twelfth and the thirteenth consist of invocations to Tārā.

The text runs as follows:-

Om Tāre tuntā
re ture svāhā¹

The same invocation is found in Tāntric works such as the Sādhana-mālā and this is one of the most common mantras on Tārā in Tibet and Nepal. Sādhana No. 98 in the Sāddhanamālā² called Kiñcit-vistara-Tārā-Sādhana³ explains how the mantra should be uttered by the devotees. It may not be out of place to summarise here the procedure of the worship of Tārā using this mantra. First, the devotee should deeply meditate on the orb of the moon which has originated from the first sound (A) (prathamāsvara). Then he should notice a blue lotus which is beautiful and on the filaments of the lotus, he should meditate

1. Sixth Progress Report 1891, Plate XX & XXI.

2. Published in the Gaekward Oriental Series, Baroda.

3. The text and translation are given in IBI.,

Appendix.A.

on the orb of the spotless moon, on which is placed the yellow bud signifying the sound Tām (pīta-Tāṅkāravījam). There issue rays of light from the yellow bud Tām, destroying the darkness of ignorance of the world and illuminating the ten quarters, to bring from the firmament the innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. After worshipping the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, he should make a confession of sins. Then he should take refuge in the Three Jewels, Buddha, Dharma and Śaṅgha; meditate on the four Brahmavihāras (Maitrī, Karunā, Muditā, Upeksā) and on the voidness (śūnyatā). Then he should meditate on the goddess Āryatārā who originates from the sound Tām and with the rays issuing therefrom, he should draw out the eternally, accomplished Bhagavatī. After thus discovering her, she should be worshipped with offerings of scented water, flowers etc. He should continue to meditate on the yellow bud signifying the syllable and the Bhagavatī. If he is unable to meditate, he should utter the mantra Om Tāre-tuttāre ture svāhā.

The Sādhana 98 continues:

"Tatrāyam mantraḥ om tāre tuttāre ture svāhā.
Mahāprabhāva evāyam mantrarājaḥ sarvair eva tathāga-
thair vanditaḥ pūjitaḥ satkṛtaś ceti...paramadurlabham

buddhatvam api karatalagataṃ tasyāvaṭiṣṭhate."¹

(This mantra here is the king of mantras and is of great lustre. This [mantra] only is praised, revered and honoured by all Tathāgatas ... And to him [who recites it] comes down easily what is loftiest and difficult of attainment, Buddhahood.)

Waddel² points out that in Tibet this mantra is repeated on the rosary 108 times or as often as possible.

Another piece of epigraphical evidence for the existence of the cult of Tārā in Ceylon is the small copper plaque measuring $1\frac{5}{8}$ in. by $\frac{11}{16}$ in. found in the Pabalu Vehera at Polonnaruwa containing a mantra written in two lines in Sinhalese script of the ninth or tenth century.

Om manipa
(dme) sv(o)sti³

It is well known that one of the most popular prayers recited in Tibet and Nepal by almost every Buddhist is Om mani-padme hūm. We notice here in the Pabalu vehera

1. Sādhana-mālā, ed. B. Bhattacharyya, GOS., XXVI, Vol. I, p. 206.

2. L.A. Waddel, The Buddhism of Tibet, Cambridge, 1934, p. 434

3. ASCAR., 1937, p. 11.

copper plaque the use of the auspicious word svasti in place of hūm in the Tibetan and Nepalese version. This seems without doubt a variant form of the same Tāntric mantra.

This six syllable prayer is the commonest mystic formula in Lamaism. Its immense popularity among the monks and the laity is mainly due to the belief that its utterance is capable of stopping the cycle of re-births and leading the reciter to the paradise Sukhāvātī. The Tibetan work attributed to Sroñ-btsan-sgampo called Mañi-bkrah-hbum¹ or (Hundred thousand precepts of the Mañi) says that this prayer is the essence of all happiness, prosperity and knowledge and the great means of deliverance; for the om² closes rebirth as a god, ma as a Titan, ni, as a man, pad as a beast, me as a spirit or ghost and hūm as an inhabitant of hell.³

To be effective, the mantra does not require to be

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1. Dated to fifteenth century, see A.I. Vostrikov, Tibetan historical literature, Calcutta, 1970, pp.52ff.
 2. Om is the sacred syllable of the Hindus which sometimes signifies the Hindu Trinity, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, which the Tibetans received from India along with the mantras.
 3. Waddel, op.cit., p.148.

actually pronounced or looked at. Equally effective is the mere revolving of a prayer wheel containing long ribbons with the formula printed thousands of times coiled into cylinders. It is a common sight in Tibet to see people carrying such prayer wheels. The formula is also inscribed on stone and printed on cloth flags; the latter type is often seen fluttering from house tops.

The legendary origin of the mantra as given in the Mani-bkash-hbum is as follows:

Once Buddha Amitābha issuing a red ray of light from his right eye brought Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi into existence; from the blue ray of light issuing from his left eye came Sgrol-ma (Sk. Tārā). When Amitābha blessed Padmapāṇi by laying his hand upon him, Padmapāṇi brought forth the prayer Om mani padme hūm and made a solemn vow to rescue all living beings from earthly existence.

This formula has mostly been explained as "Oh thou jewel in the lotus" taking padme in the masculine gender locative case. F.W.Thomas for the first time pointed out that it is the vocative case of a feminine noun ending in ā, manipadmā, the female deity of the manipadma, the jewel-lotus deity.¹ He is the deity Padmapāṇi or

1. JRAS., 1906. p. 464

Avalokiteśvara, his spiritual spouse being Tārā, here known as maṇipadmā. A.H. Francke¹ further supporting this view showed that as all the formulas are furnished with syllables like om, mum, or hūm, the nouns connected with them should be taken in the vocative case. The other formulas too are addressed to female deities. i.e. Om Vāgīśvari mum, Om Maṇipadme hūm, Om Vajrapāṇi hūm (consorts of Vāgīśvara, Maṇipadma and Vajrapāṇi). Probably it was believed that the female divinities were more effective. If it was so, it is clear why the Chinese took Avalokiteśvara in the female form as Kwan-yin.

The dating of the Ceylon copper plaque to the ninth or tenth century is fairly accurate as it is based on the paleographic development of the Sinhalese script, and as such this is significant in tracing the original

1. 'The Om maṇipadme hūm formula,' JRAS., 1915, pp.397-404.

Also see Sten Konow, 'Om maṇipadme hūm' Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, 1925, pp.1-13.

date of the mantra. According to Tibetan records, the formula goes back to the times of King Sroñ-btsan-sgam-po (c.609-649 A.D.)¹ Waddel, however, dates it to the thirteenth century.² Rockhill also argued that the formula could not be earlier than the fifteenth century when judged from internal evidence.³ Francke who dates it to the eighth century makes the following observation.

"From the excavations carried on by Sir Aurel Stein in the Taklamakhan desert, we learn that the formulas Om ā hūm and Om vajrapāṇi hūm were certainly used in at least the eighth century. For they have been traced on some of the fragments belonging to his collection. I now venture to say that if this much has been preserved we may suspect that also the two remaining formulas viz:- Om Vāgīśvari mūm and Om Manipadme hūm were known during that early period, for I believe that the three cannot be separated from one another and originally formed one single formula of the three lines. If the full formula of the

1. Date as given by D. Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson

A Cultural history of Tibet, London, 1968, p.275

2. Lamaism, p.149.

3. Land of the Lamas, pp.326ff.

three lines has not yet been found in the Stein collection, this may be due to the fragmentary character of many of the relics."¹

The Ceylon copper plaque with the ninth or tenth century Sinhalese script is clear proof that the mantra was known among the Tantrayānists in India before this time. Hence Francke's dating is more probable. The fact that the mantra was inscribed on a copper plaque in Ceylon goes to show that the Tantrayāna believers in Ceylon were well convinced of its efficacy, i.e. that one could break the fetters of samsāra by reciting it.

We may now look for references to Tārā in Sinhalese literary sources. Only one such reference occurs, in the fourteenth century Tisara Sandeśaya, where she is referred to as Tārā bisovun (queen or consort Tārā).

"Pay your obeisance to Queen Tārā (Tārā bisovun) and leave without delay - the Queen who has decked the beautiful mansion of Śrī Laṅkā with the multi-coloured canopy of fame, who has discarded vice and who is resplendent with virtue (as if with jewels), who bestows riches without fail, like the divine cow."²

1. JRAS., 1915, pp.397f

2. Tisara, v.129.

It is unfortunate that the description of Tārā deals only with spiritual qualities that would fit any deity and does not reveal any physical or iconographic features except for the fact that the bestowing of riches like a divine cow is suggestive of the varada mudrā.

Although epigraphical and literary references to Tārā are rather scanty, the discovery of a number of images of Tārā bears testimony to the fact that her cult was quite popular during the ninth and tenth centuries.¹

The most colossal of the sculptures of Tārā is the one at Buduruvagala where she is represented as an attendant of Avalokiteśvara standing to the left to him in a trio, whilst to the right stands a figure which has been identified as Sudhanakumāra.² The best known and the most illustrated³ of the images of Tārā from Ceylon

1. See CJSG., II, p. 50; MMC., pp.50-60; D.K.Dohanian, op.cit., pp.69-81.

2. CJSG., II, p. 50

3. ASCAR., 1955, Pl. XXXIII.

A.K.Coomaraswamy, Selected examples of Indian Art., Pl.XXXIII; History of Indian and Indonesian Art, fig.300 (Coomaraswamy identified this image as a Mahāyānist bronze in JRAS., 1909, but later as a representation of Pattini in his Bronzes of Ceylon, chiefly in the Colombo Museum., Colombo, 1914. note contd.

is the standing bronze at the British Museum which was found between Trincomalee and Batticaloa. A seated bronze¹ found near Gan-Ārāmaya-vihāra in the Kurunegala district and the images of Tārā found in Anurādhapura and Mannar are some of the better known of the many representations of Tārā in Ceylon.

It is striking that the images of Tārā from Ceylon are plain and far less elaborate than images of Tārā found elsewhere; they have very few or no attributes, ornaments and decorative features. It is probable that the concept of Tārā was borrowed in its basic iconographic features i.e. a human form with two hands etc., and was given shape according to the local taste.

Upulvan.

"It may reasonably be supposed that the other gods of Ceylon Buddhism too were evolved from Mahā-yānism in the same way as Nātha and Saman, but their identification with the Hindu deities has been so complete that very little or nothing can be gleaned about their original characteristics either from

P.E.P. Deraniyagala, 'Three antique bronze statues of Tārā from Ceylon', Spolia Zeylanica, 26, p.268.

1. Illustrated with photographs and discussed, by P.E.P. Deraniyagala, See Ibid.

literature or from tradition."¹

With the above statement, Parānavitana commences his discussion on the identification of the Sinhalese Buddhist god Upulvan (P.Uppalavaṇṇa, Sk. Utpalavarṇa) with Avalokiteśvara. Parānavitana points out that the earliest mention of the god Uppalavaṇṇa occurs in the Mahāvamsa.² This refers to the episode in which the Buddha, who foresaw that his doctrine would take firm root in Ceylon in the future, just before his parinibbāna instructed Sakka to provide protection for Vijaya and his companions who had just then landed in Ceylon. Sakka out of respect entrusted the guardianship of Ceylon to the "god who is in colour like the lotus"³. Parānavitana asserts that in the legend of Siṃhala as given in the Kāraṇḍavyūha, the task of rescuing Siṃhala and his companions was performed by Avalokiteśvara who is identified with the magic horse,⁴ - the identical role played by Uppalavaṇṇa in the Mahāvamsa.

1. Parānavitana, CJSG., II, pp.66,67.

2. My., 7. 1-5. Also narrated in Sdlk., p.392, Kuveni Asna, p. 2

3. devass' uppalavannassa.

4. Rajendralala Mitra, op.cit., p.97.

Another point of evidence for the identification of Upulvan with Avalokiteśvara, according to Paranavitana, was the epithet Kihirāli by which Upulvan was referred to in many literary and epigraphic records.¹ (Kihirāli is supposed to be connected with the Pali word khadira. This is probably in reference to the traditional story that the image of Upulvan was made of khadira wood, the kind of wood considered particularly appropriate for this purpose. But this story may well have been invented to explain the name. The Pali form khadirāli is obscure in meaning. Khadira or Kaira was a wood sacred to Avalokiteśvara and Tārā. A. Foucher² refers to an image of Avalokiteśvara from Koṅkanan in South India named Śrī Kairāvaṇa Lokanātha. Paranavitana, however, points out the difficulty this identification presents; namely the colour of Uppalavaṇṇa is blue or black in contrast to the white of Avalokiteśvara.

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1. Laṅkātilaka rock inscription, UCR., Vol., XVIII, Nos. 1 & 2, 1960, p.7; Mayura, v.163 ; Parevi., v.201 Kokila., v.23
 2. EIB., Pt.I, pp.104 & 138. We may add that Khadirāvaṇī Tārā or the sandalwood-grove Tārā was one of the many forms of Tārā, see, Khadirāvaṇī-Tārāsādhana in the Sādhanaṁālā.

Paranavitana also seeks evidence in Chinese inscriptions. The Portuguese historian De Queyroz mentioned that Chinese pilgrims came to worship Viṣṇu (later form of Upulvan) and their benefactions were recorded in Chinese inscriptions.¹ Paranavitana argues that the Chinese did not worship the Hindu god Viṣṇu and that Upulvan could well be a local form of a Mahāyāna Bodhisattva. Also the fact that Upulvan had been referred to as a future Buddha in certain Sinhalese literary works was pointed out as further evidence for the identification.

However, Paranavitana himself, subsequently rejected this identification and attempted to demonstrate that Upulvan was the Vedic god Varuṇa.² We hope to present fully in the coming pages the place held by Upulvan in Sinhalese Buddhism as reflected in the existing epigraphic and literary works. We shall also attempt to show how the god later gave way to the Hindu god Viṣṇu.

Though the Mahāvamsa mentioned Uppalavaṇṇa as the

1. CJSG., II, p.66.

2. See SUD.

guardian deity of Ceylon, it is not known whether the god was worshipped during the period which followed the arrival of Vijaya. After the above mentioned reference, in the Mahāvamsa, Upulvan does not figure in sculptural, epigraphic or literary works until the thirteenth century. During Parākramabāhu II's time his nephew Vīrabāhu betook himself to Devanagara, worshipped there the lotus-hued god and celebrated for him a divine sacrifice. The Cūlavamsa also states that Parākramabāhu II repaired the shrine¹ at Devanagara and celebrated every year an Āsaḥi festival (month of June or July) for the god.² This shows that the god Upulvan of Devinuvara was a popular object of worship even at the time of Parākramabāhu II

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1. On the evidence of an inscription of the eighth century, Paranavitana is led to conclude that this shrine was originally built by Dappula (Dāpūḷusen) of the seventh century, see SUD., p.1 & pp.60ff. This conclusion is supported by the Pārakumbāsirita, a fifteenth century panegyric poem which says that Dāpūḷusen built the shrine of Upulvan on seeing the god landing at Laṅkā to carry out the mission entrusted to him by the Buddha. (ed. K.D.P. Wickramasinghe, Colombo, 1954, vv.198ff).
 2. Cy., 85.85-89. The Alutnuvara devāle karavīma (British museum manuscript) a seventeenth century work narrates how Minister Devapatirāja invoked Upulvan to cure Parākramabāhu II who was suffering from an incurable disease.

(1236-1270 A.D.). Parākramabāhu IV (1302-1326) too built a temple to the lotus-hued god, where he placed a statue of the god and held a festival in the district of Māyādhanu¹ (Sītāvaka). This later became famous as the Alutnuvara devale.

The Laṅkātilaka rock inscription of Bhuvanekabāhu IV (1344 A.D.) mentions Upulvan as the foremost of the four guardian deities of Ceylon entrusted with the duty of protecting Ceylon and the Buddhist religion, the other three deities being Sumana, Vibhīṣaṇa and Skanda Kumāra of Kataragama.

Laṅkāvaṭa arak gat Kihireḷi-Upulvan-devi-
rajjuruvan-vahanse-t ...²

(The lord the divine king Kihireḷi Upulvan who has taken [upon himself] the protection of Lankā...)

Oṟuvala sannasa, a copper plate of the fourth year of Parākramabāhu VI (1412-1467 A.D.) of Kotte declares that the land given to the two Brahmans by Śrī Parākramabāhu should remain permanently theirs subject to an annual payment of fifteen fanams to god Upulvan.

(Utpalavarṇa divya rājottamayāṇanvahanse)³

1. Cv., 90.100.

2. UCR., Vol. XVIII, Nos 1 & 2, 1960, p.7. Also see Ns. p.23

3. EZ., III, p.65.

The cult of Upulvan appears to have gained a new impetus in the fifteenth century as is reflected in the Sandeśa poems. The Mayura Sandeśaya is addressed to the god Upulvan in Devinuvara, asking him to bestow health, prosperity and long life on Alageśvara, king Bhuvanekabāhu and the thera Dharmakīrti and to look after the Buddhist religion.¹

Of his spiritual characteristics, Upulvan's compassionate nature is most strongly emphasized. He is as clear as the moon and is endowed with fame like an ocean filled with water of compassion, like a fresh shower that dispels heat - he brings about welfare and prosperity to the world.² He bestows immense help on people who seek help from him.³ The weight of kindness spread over his chest is so heavy that because of it his waist has become slender.⁴ He bestows blessings instantly on those who remember him. He dispels disasters as if seen in a dream. He bestows fame valour, wisdom, comfort,

1. Vv.4, & 150-152 Upulvan is identified with Viṣṇu in the Sannaya of Mayura Sandeśaya ed. Rev.W.Deepaṅkara. Colombo.,1910.

2. Ibid., v.134.

3. Ibid., v.135.

4. Ibid., v.141.

long life and prosperity.¹

The Mayura Sandeśaya also refers to the duty of looking after the welfare of Ceylon entrusted to him by Śakra.²

Of his physical beauty and ornaments, the gem-studded crown he wears resembles a glistening lion on an añjana rock, the golden band on the forehead resembles a flash of lightning on a deep blue cloud. He wears golden earrings, which resemble a pair of suns that open up his moon face.³

The purpose of writing the Parevi Sandeśaya was to beseech the god Upulvan to protect king Parākramabāhu VI, the heir apparent (yuvarāja), the Ministers, the fourfold retinue and the country and to find a suitable husband for Princess Candrāvati (King's elder daughter) and bless her with a son.⁴ In this poem, seventeen verses are devoted to the praise of the god's virtues and physical beauty.⁵

1. Ibid., v.145.

2. Ibid., vv.132 & 149.

3. Ibid., v.134.

4. Parevi, vv. 192-197.

5. Ibid., vv.174-191.

It was also the purpose of the Kokila Sandeśaya to invoke god Upulvan to extend his protection to Prince Sapumal ruling at Jaffna and to his ministers during the reign of Parākramabāhu VI.¹

It can be said, with a fair amount of certainty that Upulvan was hailed as the national god of the Sinhalese of the fifteenth century. He was considered second only to the Buddha as shown in a verse in the Haṃsa Sandeśaya.

"Tirivaraṅgamu, the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-chief of Parākramabāhu VI, considered Upulvan second only to the Buddha; third came the king."²

The above references bear testimony to the fact that the cult of Upulvan reached its peak in the fifteenth century. This is substantiated by epigraphic evidence of the period as reflected in an inscription which records that the Ming emperor Yung-lo sent his envoys to Ceylon in 1410 together with costly presents for gods Upulvan and Saman.

1. Kokila, vv.23-30

2. Haṃsa, v.51

"His fame was such that envoys came from China, with gifts from the son of Heaven to the Lord of Tenavarai (Devinuvara)."¹

Up to the present day, shrines at Devinuvara (Devundara or Dondra in Southern Province) and Alutnuvara exist and an annual festival is held in the month of Āsaḥi, but of course the god is Viṣṇu. Today, the name Upulvan is hardly known and the general belief is that Upulvan is just another name for the Hindu God, Viṣṇu.

Paranavitana is of the opinion that the merging of Upulvan with Viṣṇu occurred not more than three or four centuries ago and that at least up to the time of Śrī Rāhula in the fifteenth century, Upulvan was distinct from Viṣṇu.² D.B.Jayatilake³ and W.F.Gunawardana⁴ put forward the following evidence for the existence of Upulvan and Viṣṇu as two distinct personages.

A verse in the Tisara Sandeśaya implies that Śrī or Lakṣmī (the goddess of Prosperity) and Sarasvatī (the goddess of Speech) who according to Hindu mythology are

1. EZ., III, pp.335ff, also see UHC., Vol.I, pt.II p.164.

2. CJSG., II. p.66.

3. Sāhitya lipi. p.108.

4. Ceylon Antiquary, Vol.IV. p.157.

the wives of Viṣṇu and Brahmā respectively left their husbands and lived with Upulvan. Viṣṇu, being unable to bear the grief, became dark of complexion. Brahmā, instead, practised brahmacaryā.¹ This is a clear instance where Viṣṇu was considered distinct from Upulvan.

A similar example in the Kokila Sandeśaya² where Upulvan is compared to Viṣṇu also goes to show they were two distinct personages, at least up to this time, Upulvan was confused with Viṣṇu in popular belief on account of the water-lily colour of the body which was common to both personages.

Paranavitana points out further that none of the iconographical characteristics of Viṣṇu, such as the vehicle garuḍa, weapons or the four arms - characteristics that were attributed to Viṣṇu by this period, is found in Upulvan. The image of Upulvan at Devundara is described as having two arms.³ By this time, it was commonplace knowledge that Viṣṇu had four hands, (Sk. caturbhuja, Sin. sivubā) as given in the old Sinhalese lexicons, such as the Ruvanmala and the Piyummala.

1. Tisara., v.21.

2. Kokila, vv.24ff.

3. Mayura. v.151.

It is thus quite clear that Viṣṇu and Upulvan remained two personages at least until the time of Śrī Rāhula. It is also clear that the confusion arose due to colour,¹ the only feature common to the two. We learn from the Portuguese historians that Viṣṇu was the object of worship at Devundara when the Portuguese attacked Southern Ceylon.² The Portuguese razed the shrine of Viṣṇu to the ground and built a church. Later, when the Portuguese abandoned the Matara District, Rājasiṅha II (1635-87) of Kandy erected a devale dedicated to Viṣṇu, at Devundara.³ A shrine of Viṣṇu stands from that time up to this day.

The forgoing data attest to the fact that by the time the Portuguese arrived in Ceylon, Upulvan had been transformed into Viṣṇu and the shrine of Upulvan at Devundara into a Viṣṇu devale. Ibn Batuta⁴ witnessed

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1. On grounds of colour, M.B.Ariyapala guessed that Kṛṣṇa or Rāma was worshipped in the form of Upulvan. Both Kṛṣṇa and Rāma were black or blue. See Society in Mediaeval Ceylon. Colombo, 1956, p.190.
 2. De Queyroz, Fernao, The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon, tr.S.G.Perera, Colombo, 1930, p.35.
 3. Ibid., p.1057.
 4. Ibn Batuta, Travels in Asia and Africa 1354-58, ed. & tr. H.A.R.Gibb, London, 1929, p.260.

thousands of Brahmans serving in the shrine of Upulvan at Devinuvara. It is recorded in the Alutnuvara devāle kirīma that Brahmans versed in Vaiṣṇava lore were invited from Rameśvaram to make an image of the god at Devinuvara.¹

The transformation of Upulvan into Viṣṇu is little surprising when we consider the influx of Brahmans during this period.² From the time of Parākramabāhu II (1236-1270 A.D.), Brahmans versed in Sanskrit and the medical science appear to have enjoyed increasing royal patronage.³ Parākramabāhu VI, an ardent supporter of Buddhism and the saṅgha, had a purohita from the Telegu country⁴ and the king is said to have made lavish land grants to Brahmans. The damaging aspects of the influence of Hindu religion and culture on Buddhism as well as on other facets of social life of the Buddhists were demonstrated by the fifteenth century poet Vīdā-gama Maitreya in his Buduguna- alankāraya.

1. Alutnuvara devāle kirīma, folio, ki. Also see SUD., p.43.

2. UHC, Vol, pt.II, p.767.

3. Daladāpūjāvalī, ed. Paṇḍita Kanadulle Ratanaraṃsi Sthavira, Anula Press, 1954, p.64.

4. EZ., III, p.51f.

The poet made a devastating attack on the worship of Hindu gods such as Viṣṇu, Īśvara, Skanda etc. It is also interesting to note that this same author requests Buddha to confer blessings on the people, thereby treating the latter as a deity. This apparently indicates a wide spread desire in the fifteenth century for deity worship.

We have examined here the cult of Upulvan because it had been earlier identified by Parānavitana (later he rejected it) as Avalokiteśvara. Our purpose of the above discussion was to examine afresh the evidence in order to see whether there were any arguments that would support the Mahāyāna origin of the cult. We must however, now conclude that on the available facts there has been no Mahāyāna influence and we are inclined to accept Parānavitana's rejection of the identity of Avalokiteśvara with Upulvan. Parānavitana's later attempts to identify Upulvan with Varuṇa are strictly outside our purview here.

Saman.

Saman or Sumana is another Buddhist god who is worshipped up to the present day. The abode of the

deity is believed to be Adam's Peak, which is known as Samanala kanda¹ (hill of Saman) or Śrīpada (Resplendent Footprint) among the Buddhists today. The fact that the mountain is known by two equally popular names points to its significance in two aspects. The former signifies the respect it commands as the abode of Saman, the latter is in allusion to the belief by the Buddhists that it bears Buddha's Footprint. (The Footprint is also believed to be Adam's by the Muslims, and Śiva's by the Hindus.)

The earliest reference to Saman and the rock of Saman occurs in the Mahāvamsa in connection with the visits of the Buddha to the island.² On his first visit, he freed the island of the yakkhas and preached the doctrine to an assembly of gods, among whom was Sumana. Later Sumana received a handful of hairs from the Buddha which he enshrined at the place where the Buddha sat.³ We learn from the Mahāvamsa that this came to be known

1. In Pali literature, it is known by many a name, i.e. Samantakūṭa, Samantagiri, Sumanakūṭa, Sumanagiri and Sumanācala. See G.P.Malalasekere, Dic.Pali Prop.Names. p.1044.

2. The Pali canon makes no reference to any of the visits of the Buddha to the island.

3. My., 1.23-36.

as the Mahiyaṅgana thūpa which exists up to day.¹

On the third visit of the Buddha to Ceylon at the invitation of the Nāga king Maṇiakkhika, after preaching the doctrine at Kālaṇiya,² Buddha placed his footprint on the Sumanakūṭa.³

It is of significance that both the Dīpavaṃsa, and Buddhaghosa's historical introduction to the Saman-tapāsādikā, which give an account of the Buddha's visits to Ceylon, make no reference to the god Sumana or to Sumanakūṭa. It is likely that the cult of Sumana was appearing in Ceylon only at the time the Mahāvamsa was being written.

Paranavitana pointed out⁴ that though the chronicles of Ceylon make no mention of god Sumana or the rock of Sumana after the Buddha's placing of his Footprint up to the eleventh century, the Tamil poem Manimekalai of the sixth century, refers to the Footprint of the Buddha on Samantakūṭa in the island of Ratnadvīpa (Ceylon).

1. Mahiyaṅgana is in Ūva province near Badulla.

2. This is where the Kālaṇiya cetiya is at a distance of about 6 miles from Colombo.

3. Mv., 1.77-78.

4. GAP., p.16

Canto XXVIII of Manimekalai describes how the spiritual beings worshipped "Samanoli" (S.Samanola) in the island of Laṅkā.¹

The next mention of the worship of the Footprint on Sumanakūṭa in the chronicles or inscriptions is found only during the time of Vijayabāhu I (1055-1110 A.D.) The Cūḷāvaṃsa records that Vijayabāhu I granted a village called Gilīmalaya to provide for the needs of the devotees who go on pilgrimage to Sumanakūṭa.² The inscriptions of Vijayabāhu I found at Gilīmalaya and at Aṃbagamuva furnish evidence for the statement in the chronicle.³ The excessive devotion of the king has made him record in the Aṃbagamuva inscription that not only the Buddha Gautama but also the three previous Buddhas⁴ sanctified the hill by leaving their Footprints there. The king was an ardent devotee of the cult himself; he climbed the hill and worshipped the Footprint.

1. S.Krishnaswami Aiyangar, Manimekalai in its historical setting, London, 1928.

2. Cv., 60.64-67

3. EZ., II, pp. 202-218

4. According to the Mahābodhivaṃsa, it was the hill of Mihintale to the east of Anurādhapura on which the three previous Buddhas placed their Footprints - Mahābodhi-vamsa. PTS, p.117.

The next reference to the Footprint of the Buddha is during the time of Nissaṅka Malla (1187-1196 A.D.). The Cūḷāvamsa¹ records that Nissaṅka Malla went on pilgrimage, attended by the fourfold army, and paid homage to the Footprint. The inscription² found on a cave known as Bhagavālena about a hundred feet below the summit confirms the statement in the Cūḷāvamsa. It says that Nissaṅka Malla granted the village of Aṃbagamuva which was originally donated by Vijayabāhu I, and it contains a statement "this is the manner in which the king Nissaṅka Malla stood worshipping the Footprint" with an outline drawing of a male figure, which must be the representation of the king.

The king who extended royal patronage next was Parākramabāhu II (1236-1270 A.D.). He too went on pilgrimage accompanied by the fourfold army, worshipped the Footprint with great devotion, offering royal garments, and dedicated the revenue of the area around the mountain up to ten gāvutas (20 miles), which produced precious stones.³

1. Cv., 80, v.24.

2. CJSG. II, pp.20,21.

3. Cv., 85. vv. 118-121

Devapatirāja, the Minister of Parākramabāhu II, at the request of the king, built bridges and rest places on the way to Sumanakūṭa, installed iron chains and iron posts to make the climb easy, built a pavilion on the summit, built an image of Saman on the terrace at the summit and held many celebrations in honour of the Footprint.¹ This is the first mention of an image of Saman, either on Sumanakūṭa, or elsewhere. Thus during this time, the worship of Saman seems to have gained increasing recognition side by side with the Footprint. The information about the activities of Parākramabāhu II in connection with the Footprint and Saman is also given in the Sinhalese work Pūjāvaliya written during the life time of the king.²

That the cult of Saman occupied an important place in popular worship in the thirteenth century is evidenced

1. Cv., 86, vv.20-33. Samansirita, an unpublished document attributed to sixteenth century, states that Samandevālaya at Ratnapura was erected in the reign of Parākramabāhu II. For details see H.B.M. Ilangasinha, A Study of Buddhism in Ceylon in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1972, pp.345f.

2. Pjv., p.699.

also by the composition of a Pali poem named Samantakūṭavannanā.¹ Though the poem is entitled Samantakūṭavannanā (the eulogy of Samantakūṭa), only twenty nine out of 802 verses are devoted to the actual description of the rock of Sumana.² The rest is on the life story of the Buddha and the three visits of the Buddha to Ceylon. The description of the Buddh's visits is very similar to that given in the Mahāvamsa. The only new factual information added in the Samantakūṭavannanā is that it was at the special invitation of God Sumana that the Buddha placed his Footprint on the mountain.

According to the poem, the rock was designated 'Samantakūṭa' because it was taller and more beautiful than the surrounding mountains.³ The names Sumanagiri and Sumanakūṭa are also used in the poem.⁴ We may note here that in the earlier part of the Mahāvamsa only the form Sumanakūṭa was used, whereas in the later parts

1. An earlier date is given by Paranavitana in 'Negapatam and Theravāda Buddhism in South India' in the Jnl. of the Gr. India Soc. Vol.XI, pp. 17-25.

2. Samantakūṭavannanā, ed.C.E.Godakumbura, PTS, London,1958.

3. Ibid., vv.722,723.

Vv.,718-746

4. Ibid., vv.516,536,796.

Samantakūṭa was preferred. It is noteworthy that the Maṇimekalai refers to the mountain as Samanoli, as well as Samantam. This shows that the form Samanoli (Samanola or Samanala is the Sinhalese word used up to the present day) and Samantam (used generally in Pali writings) existed as early as the sixth or seventh century

if the Maṇimekalai belongs to this period. And of course Sumanakūṭa is the oldest form known if the Mahāvamsa was compiled during the fifth century.

It is to be seen that around the fourteenth century god Saman assumed a role as a guardian deity of Ceylon and as a god who grants boons to devotees. It is also to be noted that he came to be known as Saman Boksäl around this time. The earliest use of this epithet, to our knowledge, appears in the Laṅkātilaka inscription of 1344 A.D., where he is mentioned as one of the four guardian deities.¹

The Nikāyaśaṅgrahaya of the fourteenth century refers to the shrines made for the worship of the four guardian deities among whom is Saman Boksäl.² In the

1. UCR., Vol.XVIII, Nos. 1 & 2, 1960, p.7

2. Ns., p.23.

Hamsa Sandesaya too, Saman Boksäl is mentioned among the four guardian deities who are asked to bestow happiness, prosperity and long life on king Parākramabāhu VI and dispel calamities from enemies so that he may protect the country and provide for the welfare of his subjects.¹ The eighteenth century Vadankavipota also mentions Saman Boksäl as a deity who grants boons to people in need.² Paranavitana points out that the term Boksäl is an equivalent of Sanskrit Bhogaśālin, 'abounding in wealth and prosperity', as further evidence for his identification of Saman with Yama who was also known for his wealth and prosperity.³ On this same evidence, Mudiyanse suggests that Saman Boksäl was an equivalent of Samantabhadra who is associated with the wish-conferring jewel, universal prosperity and happiness.⁴ We tend to concur with Mudiyanse's suggestion as it fits the identification of Saman with Samantabhadra which we will be discussing in the sequel.

The Sälalihini Sandesaya⁵ and the Sävul Sandesaya⁶

1. Hamsa v.201.

2. Vadankavipota, v.71

3. GAP., p.38

4. N. Mudiyanse, 'Samantabhadra and Sudhanakumāra,' JRASCB., N.3.Vol.XIV,1970, p.42.

5. Sälalihini, v.

6. Sävul v.7.

are two other works that refer to Saman and his abode. The message of the Sävul Sandeśaya was to request Saman at Sabaragamuva to protect and grant victory to Rājasiṅha I.

The Sävul Sandeśaya carries a long description of god Saman though it does not provide us with individual characteristics of the god.¹ The only aspect it gives information on is his dark coloured body.²

Of the centres of worship of Saman, Sabaragamuva devāle³ in the vicinity of the town Ratnapura is the best known. The building that housed the Saman devāle consisted of three storeys according to the Sävul Sandeśaya.⁴ An annual festival is held in accordance with ancient customs and rituals up to the present day. At Alutnuvara, there is another shrine dedicated to god Saman, by the side of the Mahiyaṅgana Dāgāba, which was referred to before as the first stūpa built in Ceylon under the patronage of Saman.

1. Ibid., vv. 185-198.

2. Ibid., v.185.

3. About nine miles from the foot of Adam's Peak.

4. Sävul., v.6

There is a number of other shrines dedicated to Saman scattered through the island. The image of Saman is often found in Buddhist temples together with the other three guardian deities.

The god Saman of Samantakūṭa was identified some time ago by Paranavitana as the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.¹ The evidence he presented was: the vehicle of both Saman and Samantabhadra is an elephant; the colour of both gods is green: Saman is associated with a sacred hill in Ceylon, so is Samantabhadra in China, his abode being Mount Omi² (Wo-mei-shan) in the province of Si-ch'wen; in Nepal, Samantabhadra holds a sceptre,³ so do some images of Saman in Ceylon;⁴ the names Saman and Samantabhadra indicate a common origin.

Later in 1958, Paranavitana changed his views and suggested that his former identification be given up and

1. CJSG., II, pp.64f.

2. L.A.Waddel, Bud.of Tibet., p.349; HB., Vol.II,p.23; EIB., pp.120-1 and also see, pl. VI.2 where Samantabhadra is represented in a miniature painting with a mountain in the background.

3. EIB., pp.120-1, pl. VI.2.

4. Edward Upham, History and doctrine of Buddhism, London, 1829, pl. facing p.52.

that Saman was in actuality identical with Yama.¹

Lohuizen-de Leeuw² in an article in which she identified the Kuṣṭarājagala image of Vāligama as a representation of Samantabhadra seems to modify Paranavitana's views. The above identification was made on the grounds that the crown of the Kuṣṭarājagala image contained small figures of the five Dhyāni Buddhas (Samantabhadra is considered as the Ādi-Buddha³ or the Primordial Buddha who produced the five Dhyāni Buddhas by the older unreformed sects such as Nīn-ma-pa in Tibet⁴) and that the image displayed vitarkamudrā (Samantabhadra is the only Ādi-Buddha who is represented in this mudrā).

Lohuizen also notes that early Saman images such as those in the Daṃbulla cave display mudrās similar to those of Samantabhadra, and also that having an elephant as a vehicle cannot be explained by descent from Yama, as Paranavitana has done, but only by assuming that the

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1. S. Paranavitana, The god of Adam's peak, Ascona, 1958, p.27.
 2. J.E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, 'The Kuṣṭarājagala image- an identification' in Paranavitana Felicitation Volume, Colombo, 1965, pp.253-261
 3. In Vajrayāna, the Ādi Buddha occupies the highest position in the Buddhist pantheon and is regarded to have produced the five Dhyāni Buddhas.
 4. L.A.Waddel, Bud.of Tibet, pp.72, 349.

"iconography of Samantabhadra played some role in the make up of the present god Saman". Lohuizen also points out that one piece of evidence which Parānavitana gives for the worship of Yama at Samantakūṭa, i.e. the shouting of "Karunāvai", as well as the fact that this god holds a rod with a trefoil shape knob at the upper end, could well be explained if not better so by assuming that Samantabhadra, the Ādi-Buddha of universal prosperity and kindness, contributed to the genesis of Saman. Lohuizen also points out that the fact that Parānavitana was not aware of the important position of Samantabhadra among certain sects in India, Ceylon and South East Asia would have been an added factor in Parānavitana's misidentification.

Lohuizen, however, reconciles both the views of Parānavitana with respect to Saman, that he is Samantabhadra as well as Yama, as follows:

"Certain Mahāyāna sects introduced Samantabhadra in Ceylon as Ādi-Buddha and he was worshipped actively in the island in the eighth, ninth centuries, as this is the date I should like to propose for the Vāli-gama image on style-critical grounds. When Mahāyāna Buddhism subsequently declined, the highest figure of its pantheon retained a certain popularity, but as

Hīnayāna Buddhism no longer recognized him as Ādi-Buddha, he came down from his exalted position and became one of the protectors of Ceylon. This change must have taken place before the reign of Niśśaṅka Malla (1187-1196), as the Saman figure in the Daṁbulla cave probably dates from his reign. Gradually his origin was forgotten and in the course of time more and more characteristics of Yama were grafted on his personality, which in the end emerged as the god Saman as we know him today."¹

Lohuizen's conclusions, specially as they are based on positive images in Ceylon, seem plausible and her reconciling the two views of Parānavitana appears reasonable and acceptable.

Yet it is our belief that since Lohuizen's conclusion does not go beyond the age of the earliest available Samantabhadra figures, i.e. eighth and ninth centuries, it does not explain the earlier references to Saman in the literature. We have observed above that there was a continuous tradition in the worship of Saman from at least the sixth century, the time the Mahāvamsa was written.²

1. J.E. Van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw, op.cit., p.261.

2. This is assuming that the Mahāvamsa's references to Saman during the Buddha's time reflect only the importance of Saman in the sixth century.

And if we assume, as Lohuizen states, that Samantabhadra was introduced into the Island in the eighth or ninth century, then we would have to explain the references to Saman prior to the eighth or ninth century. The only plausible explanation is that Saman was originally a local god who got identified with Samantabhadra after the introduction of the latter. This would give a process of transformation for Saman from being principally a local god up to the eighth or ninth century, then Samantabhadra up to about the twelfth century. With time, the Mahāyāna character of Samantabhadra was forgotten and the god continued to be worshipped as Saman up to present day.

Mañjuśrī.

Mañjuśrī is one of the eight principal Bodhisattvas of Mahāyāna and the wide popularity enjoyed by him is largely due to the fact that it is believed that Mañjuśrī, being the personification of transcendent wisdom, confers on the devotees wisdom and retentive memory which enables them to master the scriptures.¹

1. IBI.; pp.15ff.

The name of this deity occurs for the first time in the smaller recension of the Sukhāvatīvyūha or the Amitāyus sūtra (translated into Chinese between 384 and 417 A.D.)¹ The great powers and the wisdom of Mañjuśrī are extolled in the Gaṇḍavyūha.² The Chinese travellers, Fa-hsien (394-414 A.D.), Hsüan-tsang (629-645 A.D.) and I-tsing (671-695 A.D.) referred in their works to the images of Mañjuśrī found in India.

The cult of Mañjuśrī which originated in India took a peculiar development in China and Nepal. In Nepal, he is regarded as a historical person, the founder of Buddhism and civilization in Nepal.³ The legend about the origin of Mañjuśrī is that a golden ray issuing forth from the head of Buddha Gautama pierced a jambu tree on the mountain Pañcaśīrṣa (the hill of five peaks, Chinese Wu-tai-shan) in the Shan-si province in China and there sprang a lotus from the tree and from the interior of the flower was born Mañjuśrī. A detailed narration of the historical character is contained in the Svayambhū Purāṇa⁴ where it is said that Mañjuśrī came from Mount

1. Sukhāvatīvyūha, p.92

2. Gaṇḍavyūha, pp.36-47, 419 and passim.

3. ERE., p.405.

4. Rajendralala Mitra. op.cit., p.249. Hodgson, The Language literature and religion of Nepal. p.55

Pañcaśīrṣa on hearing that the Svayambhū, the self-born Lord (Ādi Buddha), had manifested himself in the form of a flame of fire on a lotus in the lake Kalīhrada. He cleared Nepal of the Waters with which the land was covered at the time he arrived, made the place inhabitable, payed homage to the flame of fire by erecting a temple and made Dharmākara, whom he brought with him, the king of Nepal. Thereupon Mañjuśrī returned home and soon obtained the divine form of a Bodhisattva, at the abandonment of his human body.

There are fourteen forms of Mañjuśrī described in the forty dhyānas devoted to the worship of the deity. Iconographically Mañjuśrī is usually yellow in colour and carries a sword in the right hand and a book in his left. The sword symbolises the dispelling of ignorance with the sword cutting it asunder; the book is the Prajñāpāramitā, the compendium of transcendental wisdom; it is often placed on a lotus.

Knowledge of Mañjuśrī in ancient Ceylon seems to have been rather scanty. In the Tiriyāya rock inscription¹, of the seventh century written in a script resembling Pallava Grantha

1. EZ., Vol.IV. pp. 314-316. Stanza No.6.

Mañjuvāk (Mañjuśrī) is invoked after Buddha and Avalokiteśvara.

"Munir api Mañjuvāgmadanadoṣaviṣādaharaḥ
Kanakavibhūṣaṇojjvalavitritagātrarucir
Niyatam upaiti yatra sukumāratanur bhagavān
Tad aham api praṇaumi Girikaṇḍika-caityavaram."

(I worship daily the glorious Girikaṇḍikacaitya where the sage Mañjuvāg is eternally present - the sage who dispels passion, vice and grief, the Lord with a very delicate body with limbs beautified by the lustre of the golden ornaments.)

Normally in Buddhist literature as well as in iconography, the Triad consists of Buddha, Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya, but in this inscription Maitreya has been replaced by Mañjuvāk. Mañjuśrī is here extolled as the sage of sweet speech (Mañjuvāk), an epithet not met with in Buddhist religious and iconographic texts. Vāk is, of course, one of the fourteen forms of Mañjuśrī¹ and it is probable the name Mañjuvāk for Mañjuśrī was better known in mediaeval Ceylon. It is to be noted that Mañjuśrī has been known by many appellations that bear the same meaning of sweet speech, for instance, Mañjubhāṇi and Mañjughoṣa in Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa.²

1. IBI., p.17.

2. Ed.T.Ganapati Sastri, Trivandrum, 1920-25, 628.1, 434.16, 32.23, 18.

Paranavitana pointed out¹ another likely reference to Mañjuśrī in the copper plate inscription from Anurādhapura written in Nāgari characters of about the ninth century.² Om vajratīkṣa raṃ has been given as a tentative reading and it was suggested that it could also read vajratīkṣṇa. A deity named Vajratīkṣṇa is invoked in an inscription on a Nepalese vajra published by L. de la Vallée Poussin and F.W. Thomas³.

Om vajratīkṣṇa duḥkhachedaprajñājñānamūrtaye
jñānak [ā] ya vāgiśvara arapacan [ā] ya te namaḥ

Vajratīkṣa in the Ceylon inscription and Vajratīkṣṇa in the Nepalese one differ in that the ṇ is missing in the former. In the latter Vajratīkṣṇa was used as an adjective qualifying arapacana, a well known epithet of Mañjuśrī. (Arapacana which originally is a Buddhist syllabary⁴ came to be assumed as the mystic name of the five Dhyāni Buddhas and also of Mañjuśrī.) On this evidence one may tentatively assume that the Ceylon

1. CJSG, II, p.47.

2. Now in Colombo Museum.

3. 'A Nepalese vajra' JRAS., 1916, pp.733ff.

4. Cf., The book of Zambasta, a Khotanese poem on Buddhism, ed. and tr. R.E.Emmerick, London, 1968, p.454 and A. Kunst, BSOAS., XXXIII, pt.3, p.632.f

copper plate inscription was addressed to Mañjuśrī.

Only one image of Mañjuśrī has been so far found in Ceylon. It is a figure found in Elahāra, Mātale¹ and has been identified as Mañjuśrī on account of the sword which he carries in his right hand and which is known to be Mañjuśrī's symbol. The Prajñāpāramitā manuscript which Mañjuśrī would be expected to carry in the left hand is missing; instead the hand rests on the waist. The sword is raised and touches the head-dress. The figure is decked in princely garments as is usual in the representations of Bodhisattvas. The upper part of the body is bare except for ornaments, and the drapery below the waist is elaborate with flounces at the side resembling those on the Kuṣṭarāja-gala sculpture. The Mañjuśrī figure is said to belong to the fourth or fifth century.²

We may also note here a mantra which is popularly known in Ceylon but not found in any written record.

Om Āryamañjuśrīye Avalokiteśvarāya aṣṭabud-
dhabodhisattvebhyo namaḥ

1. Now in the Anurādhapura Museum.

2. D.K. Dohanian suggests that the origin of the figure is late on grounds of style but does not give an exact date, see op.cit., p.83.

It is the popular belief in Ceylon that when the above mantra is uttered in front of a Buddha image, one gains success at an audience with a king or a minister and also one develops memory power.

Vajrapāṇi.

Vajrapāṇi is the Dhyāni Bodhisattva of the Dhyāni Buddha Akṣobhya. He is also one of the eight principal Bodhisattvas in the Mahāyāna pantheon. He carries a vajra (thunderbolt) in his hand, as the name suggests, but he is also associated with other symbols such as ghaṇṭā (bell), khadga (sword), and pāśa (rope).¹

Although there is, to my knowledge no reference to Vajrapāṇi in Sinhalese literary or epigraphic records, in Sinhalese sculptures themselves, Vajrapāṇi has been represented.

A most interesting sculpture is the centre figure² of a group of three deities to the left of the colossal Buddha at Buduruvagala, which was identified as Maitreya by Paranavitana³ on the grounds that the Buddha,

1. A Getty, op.cit., p.43

2. Reproduced in D.T.Devendra's Classical Sinhalese Sculpture, London, 1958; Heinz Mode, Die Buddhistische Plastik auf Ceylon, Leipzig,, 1963.

3. CJSG., II, p.50

Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya form the triad often represented in Buddhist iconography. (The group of three deities with Avalokiteśvara in the middle is on the right of the Buddha). Mudiyanse,¹ however pointed out that this could not be Maitreya due to the absence of a stūpa on the headdress, the distinguishing mark of Maitreya. Mudiyanse also attempted to prove that it was Vajrapāṇi because one of the attendants on either side of this figure holds a viśvavajra, the emblem of Vajrapāṇi in the right hand.

Dohanian too identified this figure as Vajrapāṇi on the assumption that the carvers identified the whole group with one attribute, as was also the case in the Avalokiteśvara triad where the nectar vessel usually held by Avalokiteśvara is shown in the pendent hand of Tārā.² Dohanian also pointed out that in Nepal, Vajrapāṇi is often represented in a triad with Buddha Amitāyus and Avalokiteśvara.³

However, we may note here that Vajrapāṇi has not been represented in such a fashion (with two attendants on either side of whom one holds a vajra) in Buddhist

1. MMC., pp.60,61.

2. D.K. Dohanian, op.cit., p.88.

3. See Getty, op.cit., p.51.

iconography. On the other hand, identifying the figure which holds the vajra as Vajrapāṇi also presents a problem, since Vajrapāṇi has not been represented in Buddhist iconography as attending any other deity. However, on the evidence presented by the above two scholars, it is quite probable that the representation of Vajrapāṇi with two attendants on either side, one of whom is carrying a vajra is an iconographic development that took place in Ceylon independently of the tradition in India and the neighbouring lands.

As further evidence for this identification, we would like to refer to two Nepalese manuscripts¹ which contain miniature paintings of Mahāyāna deities with inscriptions giving names and titles written in Bengali script of the eleventh century. In one of these, there is a painting of Dīpaṅkara of Ceylon (described in the inscription as Sinhaladvīpe Dīpaṅkara āriṣasthāna) with Avalokiteśvara of white colour to the right and Vajrapāṇi of green colour to the left², identical positions taken by the two deities represented in the Buduruvagala images.

1. These manuscripts, now in Cambridge have been described in EIB., pt.I., pp.189-214. Also see pp. 80 f.

2. Illustrated in EIB., pl. II,2.

From this, we may infer that an iconographic tradition of carving the triad of Buddha Dīpaṅkara, Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi¹ existed in Ceylon prior to the eleventh century² and was known to the Northern Indians. It is possible that the Buduruvagala sculptures belonged to this particular tradition, and if this is the case, then the image of the Buddha at Buduruvagala would have to be that of Dīpaṅkara rather than Gautama.

This proposition is further supported by the fact that Vajrapāṇi appears to be specially associated with Buddha Dīpaṅkara in the Ceylon tradition. There is another painting in these same manuscripts (described in the inscription as Sīṅhaladvīpe Dīpaṅkara Abhaya-hasta) where Vajrapāṇi of green colour appears to the left of Buddha Dīpaṅkara standing with legs crossed and holding a thunderbolt in the right hand and a blue lotus in the left.³ We may surmise that our Vajrapāṇi

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1. In Java, Buddha Dīpaṅkara is attended by Avalokiteśvara on the left and Mañjuśrī on the right.
 2. D.K.Dohanian dated the Buduruvagala images to the ninth and tenth centuries, see op.cit., p.89
 3. Illustrated in EIB., pl.II, 3. Foucher (p.121) says of Vajrapāṇi, "Comme Samantabhadra, il est vert et, comme Mañjuśrī, il a le lotus bleu pour emblème.

figure at Buduruvagala also carried a lotus judging from the position of his fingers, which display a mudrā very similar to kāṭakahasta¹ and give an impression of holding a flower.² This, therefore seems to confirm that the Buddha figure at Buduruvagala is of Dīpaṅkara.

The other image of Vajrapāṇi from Ceylon is of bronze and can be found in the Coomaraswamy collection of the Boston Museum.³ This image can be with certainty identified as Vajrapāṇi, as the deity seated in royal style is holding a vajra in the right hand and bears resemblance to other images of Vajrapāṇi.⁴ The figure is 4 3/4" in height and has been dated to the ninth century.⁵

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- 1 Gopinath Rao, Elements of Hindu Iconography, Madras, 1914, p.16.
 2. D.R. Thapar has given a drawing of this attitude which is seen in images holding flowers, See his Icons in bronze, London, 1961, p.29.
 3. This image has been illustrated and discussed by A.K. Coomaraswamy in the following:
Bronzes of Ceylon... fig, 185; History of Indian... fig.299; JRAS., April, 1909, pl.I.fig. 3 & 5.
 4. Cf. IBI., pl. XII, fig. b & c.
 5. A.K. Coomaraswamy, Bronzes of Ceylon... p.7

Vajrasattva.

Vajrasattva is regarded as the Ādi Buddha in the Vajrayāna and the Mantrayāna,¹ and is usually represented with the symbols vajra and ghaṇṭā.² The two deities Jambhala and Cundā are said to emanate from Vajrasattva.³

Vajrasattva has not been mentioned in Ceylonese literary or epigraphic works. Even in sculpture, he has been poorly represented as evidenced in the single image so far found in Ceylon. This figure which has been found at Mādirigiriya in Tamankaḍuva⁴ measures $6\frac{1}{4}$ " in height and is seated in the vajraparyāṅka posture (with legs crossed) with the soles of the feet turned upwards. The figure holds a viśvavajra in the right hand and there is no ghaṇṭā in the left. The left hand is placed on the lap with the palms open. The upper part of the body which is bare is decked with various ornaments. The conical headdress consists of five tiers and the heavy ear rings appear as if they rested on the

1. André Bareau, Der indische Buddhismus, pp.183,185.

2. IBI., p.6

3. Ibid., pp.114,130.

4. Illustrated by D.T.Devendra, Buddha Image and Ceylon, Colombo, 1957, pl.XXVII, also see MMC., pl.6.

shoulders. The eyes are turned towards the ground and there is a broad smile on the face.

Cundā.

The Sādhana-mālā names Cundā as the feminine emanation of Vajrasattva and describes several sādhanas devoted to her worship.¹

Although there is no reference to Cundā in Ceylon literature or epigraphy, three seated bronze statues of Cundā found in Ceylon attest to the knowledge of this deity if not her cult. The first example² identified by Coomaraswamy is one-faced, four-armed, and carries the rosary in the upper right arm as in the Amarāvātī figure illustrated by Foucher.³ The upper left hand holds an object and Coomaraswamy presumed that it might be a book.⁴ Mudiyanse provisionally identified it as a lotus bud or a nectar vessel.⁵ The second pair of arms are holding a bowl and is decked in many ornaments. The headdress bears a nectar vessel or a stūpa⁶ instead

1. IBI., p.131

2. A.K. Coomaraswamy, Bronzes of Ceylon ... fig.178.

3. EIB., fig.24.

4. JRAS., April, 1909, p.291.

5. MMC., p.66.

6. Bronzes, p.21; JRAS., April, 1909. p.291.

of the image of Vajrasattva as described in the Sādhanamālā.

The second figure too is one-faced, four-armed and presents a variation in the objects and positions they are held in.¹ The lower right hand holds the book and the left, the bowl. The upper right hand with the thumb and the last two fingers bent and the middle two open either holds an object or displays a mudra which cannot be identified. In the headdress appears the figure of a Dhyāni Buddha. Coomaraswamy assigned the two figures to the ninth and tenth centuries.

The third figure which is $4\frac{5}{8}$ " in height is very similar to the second example except for the fact that the upper right hand holds the bowl while the book is held by the left.² Mudiyanse considers the third figure to be the best of the three and dates it to the eighth, ninth centuries, a period earlier than that of the other two.³

Jambhala.

Jambhala is the Mahāyāna god equivalent to Kuvera,

1. Bronzes of Ceylon ... fig.179; JRAS., April, 1909, pl.III, fig.1.

2. Illustrated in MMC., pl.29 3. Ibid., p.67.

the Brahmanical god of wealth. According to the Sādhana-mālā¹, there are several forms of Jambhala which emanate from Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava or Vajrasattva or from a combination of the five Dhyāni Buddhas.²

In Hinduism, and later in Buddhism, Kuvera or Vaiśravaṇa (P.Vessavaṇa) is regarded as one of the four Dikpālas (Guardians of the Quarters) or Lokapālas (Protectors of the world). He is also the ruler of yakṣas, the guardians of treasures.³

The association of Kuvera with Ceylon is met with in a Mahāyānist Sanskrit work, Mahāmayūrī (translated into Chinese in the fourth century), which enumerates various deities who were worshipped in different regions. Dhaneśvara (Lord of wealth) is mentioned as the deity among the Siṃhalas (Siṃhaleṣu Dhaneśvarah)⁴. This and the numerous references in the Ceylon chronicles⁵ attest to the prevalence of the cult of Kuvera in Ceylon from the earliest times.

1. IBI., pp.237-239

2. EIB., II,p.51.

3. S.Paranavitana, 'Sīgiri, Abode of a God-king', JRASCB., N.S. Vol.I.

4. JA., 1915,p.40

5. Mv.,10.89;27.29; Cy.,37.106;39.5;74.2o7;80.5; 87.31

The prevalence of the cult of Kuvera (Jambhala) in ancient Ceylon is further evidenced by references to Sinhalaadvīpe Jambhalah ārisasaptama-parivarttaḥ¹ and Sinhalaadvīpe Jambhala-Bhaṭṭāraka² in the Nepalese manuscripts with miniature paintings (which we referred to above). Foucher describes the former as having a terrible appearance, yellow in colour and seated in Indian fashion with the left leg hanging down. The right hand displays varadamudrā and holds a lemon (jambhara) and the left, a mongoose (nakula). Of the two female attendant deities, the one on the right is yellow and the one on the left is white. Foucher is not certain whether or not they are Tārās. In the background, there is a mountain and a forest. In the second painting, too, Jambhala is yellow in colour and terrible in appearance and is seated under a tree. The right leg is folded and the left is at ease. The right hand holds a lemon and the left, a mongoose. There is only one companion in this case, also of yellowish colour, carrying an object which Foucher takes to be a purse.

Two images of Jambhala have been found in Ceylon.

1. EIB., I, p.192.

2. Ibid., p.211.

Our first example¹, a bronze now in the Boston Museum, carries a mongoose in the left hand and a lemon in the right with the right leg hanging down. The mongoose is seen vomiting coins into a pot and there is another pot with coins overturned by the right foot. A ribbon-like band issuing from this vessel which resembles a snake is noticeable. The image represents more a human pot-bellied trader awaiting customers than a deity. As Coomaraswamy puts it;

"the artistic interest in this figure lies in its frank realism contrasting with the idealistic treatment of the Bodhisattva figures."

The second bronze figure of Jambhala² is in the Osmund de Silva collection in Colombo and resembles to a large extent the bronze in the Boston Museum.

We have discussed in this chapter various local deities who have been influenced by Mahāyāna as well as Mahāyāna gods who were worshipped either in their pure

1. Illustrated by A.K. Coomaraswamy, Bronzes ... fig.182 & 183, History of Indian... fig.298, JRAS., 1909 April, pl.I, fig.4; also by Vincent Smith, History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon, fig.196; MMC., pl.30.
2. ASCAR., 1960-61, p.G.40

form or after a process of metamorphosis. In conclusion we would like to point out some important factors that emerge from the above study.

Avalokiteśvara is well represented in epigraphic and literary sources as well as in sculpture from the seventh to the fifteenth century. From the tenth century, Avalokiteśvara was mostly known as Nātha and his cult seems to have reached its high point in the fifteenth century. Although Nātha is worshipped in Ceylon today (mostly in Kandy) his importance as a deity has largely diminished. Tārā, Avalokiteśvara's spouse finds mention in epigraphic and literary records from the ninth to the fifteenth century and her sculptural remains are of the ninth and tenth centuries. There seems to be no reference to her since the fifteenth century and today her cult is virtually unknown in Ceylon.

Upulvan who was originally a local god has been referred to in literary as well as epigraphic records though no sculptural remains of the deity are found today. A closer examination of the available evidence does not reveal any Mahāyāna influence on the cult of this god. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Upulvan was the major god of Ceylon, and towards the

latter part of that period he was metamorphosized into Viṣṇu, whose cult occupies a central position today as an object of worship in Ceylon.

Saman, presumably a local deity, originally finds mention in the Mahāvamsa, Maṇimekalai and in other literary works of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. The worship of Saman reached its peak in the thirteenth century. In the eighth and ninth centuries, however, Saman became identified with Samantabhadra due to the influence of Vajrayāna. Saman is still worshipped today as a guardian deity and as the god who provides security and a safe journey to those devotees who climb Adam's Peak.

The gods Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi, Vajrasattva, Cundā and Jambhala have been represented mostly by sculptural remains spanning the period between the seventh and tenth centuries. These gods after a period of prominence in these centuries seem to have passed into oblivion and they find no mention in religious practices today.

All the Mahāyāna gods as well as those local gods who underwent Mahāyāna influence have had their periods of rise and fall. The period between the seventh and tenth centuries is one where apparently almost all

These gods were known and worshipped widely. Of these
ods, only the worship of Avalokiteśvara (Nātha), and
f Saman persists up to the present day.

Chapter VI

The Development of the Bodhisattva Cult

as an Ideology of Kingship

From early times the concept of kingship has been intimately bound with the ideas of Buddhism as interpreted by the Buddhist Orders in Ceylon. This is reflected for example, in the concept of kingship held by the writer of the Mahāvamsa and applied to such illustrious kings as Duṭṭhagamaṇī etc. These qualities of an ideal Buddhist king gradually grew over the years largely due to non-orthodox elements so that by the fifteenth century, a fully developed concept of the king as Bodhisattva had come into being. In this chapter, we will trace the growth of these ideas relating to various kings with the help of evidence from the chronicles, literary and epigraphic sources.

Before we discuss Ceylon kings, brief mention should be made of some of the characteristics of Aśokan kingship, specially since it was held as an example of an ideal kingship by Ceylon rulers. But this concept of Aśoka as an ideal is not necessarily the historical Aśoka

as depicted in his inscriptions but an 'Aśoka' developed by the Ceylonese (mainly those associated with the Mahāvihāra). As Bechert puts it, "It was of course not the tolerant Aśoka who tried to develop a dharma generally acceptable in a multi-religious society- that is, the Aśoka we know from his inscriptions- that influenced the thinking of later periods. Buddhists in the Theravāda countries only knew Aśoka as depicted in Pali commentaries and chronicles, namely Aśoka as follower and partisan of the Theravāda School."¹

Under Aśoka's regime there was apparently freedom of expression for many religious orders and no attempt was made to enforce a narrowly defined 'Buddhistic' hegemony. Although the greatest patron of Buddhism, there were no tendencies on his part to brand followers of other systems in derogatory and vilificatory terms.

Ceylon at the time of Devānaṃpiya Tissa (250-210 B.C.), in contrast to her great northerly neighbour, was presumably culturally unsophisticated and an organised

1. Heinz Bechert, 'Theravāda Buddhist Saṅgha. Some general observations on historical and political factors on its development.' Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XXIX, No. 4. Aug. 1970.

religion which pervaded the society similar to the developed Brahmanism of India was absent. Although deities and ideas of Brahmanism would have been present, there is no evidence to show that their influence was such as to greatly influence the bulk of the population. With royal patronage given to Buddhism in Ceylon and in the presence of a virtual tabula rasa in the cultural sphere, Ceylon thus became the first country to come under the complete sway of Buddhism and to absorb its ideas in the development of the country's culture and civilization.

The use of Buddhism as an ideology to bolster temporal power is first found in the Mahāvamsa's treatment of the life and times of its hero Duṭṭhagāmaṇī-(161-137 B.C.). By a process of ideological transformation, many blatantly non-Buddhist (more properly anti-Buddhist) acts of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī are reinterpreted as conforming to the tenets of Buddhism. Thus killing of human beings is not an evil. Duṭṭhagāmaṇī when feeling guilty on the death of many killed in the war is consoled by the monks.

"From this deed arises no hindrance in thy way to heaven. Only one and a half human beings have been slain here by thee, O lord of men. The one had come unto the (three) refuges, the other taken on

himself the five precepts. Unbelievers and men of evil life were the rest, not more to be esteemed than beasts. But as for thee, thou wilt bring glory to the doctrine of the Buddha in manifold ways; therefore cast away care from thy heart, O ruler of men."¹

In fact, Duṭṭhagāmaṇī according to the Mahāvamsa marched with a relic in his spear and having shown favour to the saṅgha, began his military campaign by saying;

"I will go on to the land on the further side of the river to bring glory to the doctrine. Give us, that we may treat them with honour, bhikkhūs who shall go with us, since the sight of bhikkhūs is blessing and protection for us."²

The relationship of Buddhist ideology and temporal power as displayed by Duṭṭhagāmaṇī stands in sharp contrast to that of Aśoka and of course to the example of Buddha himself. In the Aśokan case, Buddhism resulted in the lessening of a search for temporal power as Aśoka's digvijaya gave way to dharmavijaya. In the case of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, Buddhist ideology supports and abets his search

1. Mv., tr. p.178.

2. Mv., tr. p.170.

for temporal power.

The Mahāvamsa's treatment of the other kings is likewise coloured by ideological factors. In these cases, kings who supported the 'Buddhism' of the Mahāvihāra and bestowed on it wealth and patronage in the form of stūpas monasteries etc. are spoken of eloquently whereas other kings, who were either opposed to or indifferent to the Mahāvihāra are dealt with less favourably. Thus Buddhism as an ideology has been used by the Mahāvihāra to aggrandize the power and lustre of the kings as well as to subtract these qualities from the kings who were found unacceptable. By Buddhism, here is of course meant by us not those aspects of Buddhism associated only with personal salvation but a body of ideas associated with secular matters that were consciously made use of by monks as well as by kings in order to legitimize the position of the latter.

The elevation of king to a Bodhisattva is a culmination of this process of using Buddhist ideology to bolster temporal power in Ceylon. The king became a source of not only political power but also to a certain extent of ideological-religious power. In the latter function, the role of the king was that of a supreme guardian as

well as the patron of the śāsana and at times even an adjudicator in cases of religious controversies. The role of the king in the religious sphere helped to legitimize his claims to kingship and his exercise of political and religious authority in the country.

The first beginnings of a Bodhisattva cult are seen in the Mahāvamsa's description of the reign of Sirisaṅghabodhi, (247-249 A.D.). The Sirisaṅghabodhi ideal was to become the model on which later kings nurtured themselves. Sirisaṅghabodhi lived shortly after the reign of Vohārika Tissa, (209-231 A.D.) during which the Vaitulyavadins openly challenged the established doctrine and the king burnt the Vaitulya books¹. This was also the time when Mahāyāna activities had strongly developed in India. And considering the attempts made to suppress Vaitulyavāda, it is apparent that Mahāyāna elements were penetrating and finding fertile soil in the country. The Bodhisattva ideal as a doctrine of salvation was developed by the Mahāyānists and the life of Srisaṅghabodhi as depicted in the Mahāvamsa seems to be the realization of the Bodhisattva ideal in practice. (We are not told in the chronicles or elsewhere that he showed favour for the Vaitulya doctrine.)

1. See pp. 14 f.

Thus the cult of Sirisaṅghabodhi seems to be the unconscious beginning of the fully developed cult of the Bodhisattva kings in which the Bodhisattva ideals were transferred to the kings. In this connection, we should emphasize that this is probably the first beginning of the development of this cult anywhere.

Sirisaṅghabodhi is extolled in the Mahāvamsa in terms only next to Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, although only 24 verses are devoted to it. For the first time, we hear of an actual human being (rather significant that it was a king) who sacrificed his life for the good of others, a practice we are familiar with in the Jātaka stories. Thus Sirisaṅghabodhi set forth an ideal of kingship, the best a king could live up to.

The episodes connected with his life as narrated in the Mahāvamsa reflect the nature of a superhuman being. When a severe drought affected the country, he resorted to saccakiriya ('act of truth'); he wished for rain by his virtue and compassion and was successful. When rebels caused fear, he burnt dead bodies secretly, pretending that they were live bodies, to show terror and discourage people from such behaviour. When the yakkha named Rattakkhi demanded human flesh, the king offered himself,

after which the yakkha declined. Later when he learnt that Goṭhābhaya was anxious to capture him, in order to become king, he fled with the compassionate intention to avoid inflicting harm on others, and when he heard that Goṭhābhaya was looking for the head of Sirisaṅghabodhi, to be assured of his claim for kingship, Sirisaṅghabodhi is said to have severed his head with his own hands and sent it to Goṭhābhaya. This was the culmination of his 'Bodhisattva career'. The selfless acts of Sirisaṅghabodhi were direct expressions of the later fully developed Bodhisattva ideal, the central point of the Mahāyāna doctrine. The Mahāvamsa does not explicitly state that Sirisaṅghabodhi performed these selfless acts with the intention of attaining Enlightenment, presumably because it might seem to be going against the Mahāvihāra ethos at the time.

However, later Pali as well as Sinhalese works elaborated on this aspect of the career of Sirisaṅghabodhi to a great degree. The Hatthavanagallavihāravamsa¹ (thirteenth century) is a Pali prose devoted entirely to the life of

1. Ed. C.E. Godakumbura, PTS., London, 1956, p.43.

Here the biography of Sirisaṅghabodhi sounds quite like a Jātaka story.

Sirisaṅghabodhi and the erection of religious monuments on the spot where the king performed the 'great act'. The Pūjāvaliya¹ and the Rājāvaliya² (seventeenth century) have described the virtuous life of Sirisaṅghabodhi and his aspiration to Buddhahood.

Acts of self-immolation are better known in the Mahāyāna works (for example, the Saddharmapundarīka) than in the Pali tradition.³ Though the Mahāvamsa avoids the mention of the king's aspiration to Buddhahood, after

1. Pjv., p.683.

2. Ed. B Gunasekara, Colombo, 1911, pp.35-36.

3. See p.240 f.

The offering of the head as an act of sacrifice is known in Pallava and early Coḷa Sculptures, associated with the worship of Durgā. (U.N. Ghoshal, The beginnings of Indian historiography and other essays, Calcutta, 1944, pp.200ff). Ghoshal has pointed out the depiction of such rites in sculpture as far back as the Gupta period, and the description of rites in ancient religious literature such as the Rāmāyana, Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa and Kālikā Purāṇa. It is of interest to note that a twelfth century bas-relief found at Polonnaruva (now at the Anurādhapura museum) depicts a devotee in the act of self-immolation associated with the worship of Durgā.

offering his head, it uses the epithet Mahāsatta, which aptly describes the Bodhisattva intentions of the king.

"Thus by the great man (Mahāsatta) compassionate to all beings, by the torch of the island (dīpadīpam), was the fear of pestilence brought to an end."¹

The term Mahāsatta is normally used only in reference to a Buddha or Bodhisattva. The use of the word Mahāsatta equivalent in meaning to a Bodhisattva, by the Mahāvamsa, a chronicle of the orthodox centre, is but evidence of a prevailing zeitgeist that emphasized these ideas.

The Mahāvamsa also in its treatment of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, although not accepting a Bodhisattva concept overtly, seems to do so in a disguised manner. The Mahāvamsa elevates the future position of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī, apparently to fit into a new idea of kingship; Duṭṭhagāmaṇī is to be born as chief disciple of the future Buddha Metteyya, a position almost in the same rank as a Bodhisattva. It is to be noted that the Dīpavamsa makes no such mention.

1. "Mahāsattena tenevaṃ sabbabhūtānukampinā Mahārogabhayaṃ jātaṃ dīpadīpena nāsitaṃ." Mv., 36.90

The supreme act of king Sirisaṅghabodhi not only set forth an ideal of kingship but inspired the later kings to assume his name as a throne name. The Sinhalese kings from the beginning of the seventh up to the twelfth century, alternately¹ assumed the title 'Sirisaṅghabodhi' as the throne name and from the thirteenth up to the sixteenth century every king had this title. Hence the title 'Sirisaṅghabodhi' reflects the current trends of the ideals of kingship.

Before this title came into vogue, as an instrument for legitimizing royal power, the title 'Devānaṃpiya' was in use, for a similar purpose, starting from Devānaṃpiya Tissa who imitated the title of his benefactor, Aśoka. Many kings, e.g. Uttiya, Duṭṭhagāmaṇi Abhaya, used this title² and the epigraphical records³ reveal that the title was in use up to about the fifth century. 'Buddhadāsa', i.e. 'servant of the Buddha', was another title borne by kings from the fourth to the tenth century and used for similar purposes. 'Buddhadāsa', it

1. The alternate title was 'Salamevan' (Śīlāmeghavarṇa)

2. See T.Hettiarachchi, History of kingship in Ceylon up to the fourth century A.D. . Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London, 1970. p.73.

3. EZ., 111. pp.155-6.

should be noted was often used together with 'Sirisaṅghabodhi' emphasizing the common ideological aims. On the ideological significance of these types of royal titles, we should mention the Vamsatthappakāsinī¹ which referring to the title 'Devānāmpiya' states that the king was so known by the people because he was bent on meritorious work leading to heavenly life. Any royal title assumed by a king is thus suggestive of what the king is or what he ought to be.

It was Aggabodhi II (604-614 A.D.) who assumed the title 'Sirisaṅghabodhi' for the first time.² A special preference for the name 'Sanghabodhi' and names bearing affinity to 'Sanghabodhi' could be noticed during this period. The predecessor of king Aggabodhi II, Aggabodhi I who was his uncle, was the first king after Sirisaṅghabodhi to have a name containing the word 'bodhi'. Among the numerous religious monuments erected by Aggabodhi I, was a parivena which bears the name Sirisaṅghabodhi.³ All

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1. Vamsatthappakāsinī, ed. G.P. Malalasekara, PTS., London, 1935, p.310.
 2. UHC., p.365.
 3. Cv., 42.10.

this reflects an attempt made at reviving memories of the virtues of Sirisaṅghabodhi with the intention of creating an impression in the minds of the people that the kings of this era followed the noble conduct set forth by Sirisaṅghabodhi.

According to the chronicles, after Sirisaṅghabodhi, Buddhādāsa (337-365 A.D.) was the next king who was associated with Bodhisattva ideals. In the words of the Cūlavamsa;

"The ruler lived openly before the people the life that Bodhisattvas lead¹ and had pity for (all) beings as a father (has pity for) his children."²

The king is even compared to the Buddha, with the king's eighty sons bearing names of the Buddha's eighty disciples, such as Sāriputta etc.³ The comparison of the king to the Buddha is significant and the use of the term 'Sambuddharājā'⁴ (lit. all-Enlightened king i.e. Buddha) has enriched the idea contained in the simile. It is

1. Cariyam bodhisattānam dassento sakkhi pāṇinaṃ.Cv.,37.109

2. Cv., tr. p.10

3. Sāriputtādināmehi puttehi parivārīto

Buddhadāso sa Sambuddharājāviya virocatha. Cv.,37.

176-177.

4. This reminds one of 'Devarāja' and 'Buddharāja' cults in Cambodia. See pp.404 ff.

nothing but natural for the chronicle to paint as a Bodhisattva a king who was well known for his benevolence, specially his dedication to medical activities which saved the lives of human beings as well as animals.

Buddhadāsa is said to have placed the precious jewel he obtained (as a result of one of his medical feats) from a snake as eye in the stone image of the Buddha in the Abhayagiri monastery.¹ On this evidence, we may surmise that the kings showed special favour to the Abhayagiri monastery. We may remember here that it was his grandfather who demanded of the Mahāvihāra monks to accept the Vaitulyavāda, the doctrine adhered to by the Abhayagiri monks.² Inscriptional evidence cited below may lend further support to this conjecture. Buddhadāsa has been referred to as Budadasa Mahasena (Buddhadāsa Mahāsena) in the Ruvanvālisāya pillar-inscription.³ The fact that he was known by the name of his grandfather Mahāsena, who has been painted in the Mahāvamsa as one of the worst enemies of the Mahāvihāra may suggest that

1. Cv., 37.123.

2. See p.

3. EZ., 111, pp.122ff

either Mahāsena was not such an unpopular king as alleged by the Mahāvamsa or that Buddhādāsa lent special patronage to the Abhayagiri monastery, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, while not neglecting the Mahāvihāra monastery; or it may indicate both.¹

The Cūlavamsa records² that the eldest son of Buddhādāsa, Upatissa I (365-406 A.D.), fulfilled the ten pāramitās. It is the future Buddhas who fulfill perfections. The next son of King Buddhādāsa, Mahānāma (406-428), seems to have shown special favour to the Abhayagiri Vihāra. He erected three vihāras, Lohadvāra, Ralaggāma, and Koṭipassāvana and presented them to the bhikkhūs of the Abhayagiri Vihāra. It was at the Mahesī's instigation that he bestowed on the bhikkhūs of the Theravāda school, the vihāra built on the Dhūmurakkha mountain.² It is clear from the words of the Cūlavamsa, that Buddhādāsa and his sons were well aware of the ideals of the Bodhisattva king.

It is true that our only source is the Cūlavamsa, a text of the thirteenth century. It is possible that the chroniclers in describing the life of Buddhādāsa and his sons were wrongly attributing the Bodhisattva ideal prevalent at their time to kings who lived about nine centuries earlier, whom they considered favourably. In

1. Cv., 37.180

2. Cv., 37.212-214.

this regard, we should emphasize that not all kings in the Cūlavamsa are described in this manner, many kings not being described as having Bodhisattva qualities. In view of the fact that the Mahāvamsa has described Sirisaṅghabodhi with Bodhisattva qualities, it is our belief that records contemporaneous with Buddhādāsa, on which presumably the Cūlavamsa would have based its data, would also have described Buddhādāsa and others in a similar fashion. This may hold true also in case of other kings who have been said by the chroniclers to have possessed Bodhisattva qualities.

It may not be a mere coincidence that certain kings who showed favour to the Abhayagiri Vihāra (even according to the chronicles) were associated with the Bodhisattva cult. Dhātusena was the next king who fell into this category. He is credited with the construction of a vast number of religious monuments and renovations for the Abhayagiri Vihara. He replaced with a pair of costly jewels the eyes of the stone image of Buddha which were missing (those placed by King Buddhādāsa) and erected a shrine room with a pavilion for the image. Further references in the Cūlavamsa testify to the immense interest he showed in the erection and the maintenance of Bodhisattva

figures rather than of Buddha images.¹

The first direct reference to a king aspiring to attain Buddhahood occurs in the description of Aggabodhi I (571-604) in the Cūlavamsa: "Aggabodhi, the highly favoured of fortune, sister's son of King Mahānāga, now became king whose aspiration was the attainment of the highest enlightenment".² In this connection we may bear in mind that it is also evident from the Cūlavamsa that Aggabodhi I showed favour to the orthodox sect. He is reported to have been pleased with thera Jotipāla who defeated in controversy the adherents of the Vaitulya school and provided him with special protection.³

The behaviour of Aggabodhi I in aspiring to Buddhahood and his attitude against the Vaitulyavādins are apparently contradictory. The conventional wisdom was that the Theravāda orthodoxy was not associated with Mahāyāna concepts such as the aspiration to Buddhahood. But we have discussed elsewhere how the Mahāvihāra tradition absorbed

1. Cv., 38.65-69

2. Mahānāganarindassa bhāgineyyo subhāgiyo
So Aggabodhi rājāsī aggabodhigatāsayo.

Cv., 42, 1-2

3. Cv., 42, 35-39.

and claimed as its own certain concepts of the Mahāyāna school against which they had fought at an earlier time.

The Cūlavamsa records the Bodhisattva life of Sena I (833-853 A.D.) in the following manner:

"Sovereign whose aspiration was directed to the Buddha Step."¹ 'Buddhabhūmi' is the highest of the ten stages of spiritual development of Bodhisattva according to the Mahāyāna. The use of this term suggests Mahāyāna influence.²

The Cūlavamsa description of Sena I gives a thorough insight into the conduct of kings held in high esteem by the chronicler.

"Hereupon his younger brother Sena raised the umbrella (of dominion) in the town, abounding in riches, who looked on all creatures as on a dear son. He adhered to the conduct of former kings in accordance with tradition, and he performed also pious actions before unheard of. Towards bhikkhūs, bhikkhunīs, his kinsfolk and (the other) islanders,

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1. Pasādam so va kāresi vihāre Jetanāmake Anekabhūmiṃ bhūmino buddhabhūmigatāsayo. Cv., 50.65
We think bhūmi could be better translated as 'state' rather than 'step'.
 2. See Edgerton, op.cit.

towards fishes, four-footed beasts and the birds he fulfilled every duty. He had Mahinda who had be-taken himself to the opposite shore, slain by agents. In such wise he cleared his path of all who could dispute with him the royal dignity."¹

The king who aspired to Buddhahood with all his virtues had his kinsman slain!

It is reasonable to conclude that already before the ninth century, the Bodhisattva cult was well recognized as an ideological factor of kingship, implying that the king was expected to have a moral responsibility for the country and himself which should induce him to lead the exemplary life of a Bodhisattva. By the ninth century, however, the king's authority over monastic administration was becoming inevitable and the king came to assume more and more power over monks and religious centres. It is significant that by the tenth century, the religious and political climate prompted the king to use the Bodhisattva concept for political ends. We may examine here how this new political ideology developed.

1. Cv., 50. 1-4.

It is to be noted that Ns., presents a different picture of Sena I. He is referred to as "a man who had not associated with men of learning and who accepted the false Vājiriyavāda after abandoning the true doctrine."

Ns., p.16 Also see pp. 63 f.

The monasteries, which at the beginning served as mere centres of religious and cultural activities, began to own considerable extents of land where the control of the property and the tenants demanded an organized system of administration. A bureaucracy had to be set up and rules and regulations for the maintenance of monasteries laid down. Meanwhile in the country as a whole, a centralized form of government with the king as the source of absolute power had developed. The religious organization of the country, as well as the political control was centred on the king who was source and sum of all authority, and the custodian of the established order, including of course the Buddhist monastic order.

A number of inscriptions belonging to the ninth and tenth centuries¹ illustrate the king's initiative in laying down rules and regulations pertaining to the administration of monasteries and their property, even

1. W. Rahula, (op. cit., p.136) points out that although most of the lithic records belong to the ninth and tenth centuries, one may assume that the system of administration of monasteries recorded in them was based on similar earlier schemes.

including directives on the recruitment and discipline of monks¹. However, there is no reason to assume that the king imposed rules and regulations on the monastery; on the contrary, the king always consulted the inmates of the monastery concerned or other responsible monks in the preparation of the rules² but he was the head of authority that formulated the ecclesiastical regulations.

Not only the formulation of the rules but also their proper enforcement in the interest of the Saṅgha was the duty of the king, though the entire administration was

1. Tablets of Mahinda IV at Mihintale, Slab A.

"[Thus] in respect of the great community of monks living in this vihāra, as well as in respect of the employees, the serfs, [their respective] duties, and the receipts and disbursements, His Majesty passed these [following] regulations, rendering them explicit by means of comments."

EZ., 1, p. 99

2. Mahinda IV convened an assembly of monks from both Abhayagiri Vihāra and Cetiyagiri Vihāra in order to decide upon a set of rules for a monastery belonging to the Abhayagiri Vihāra. EZ., I, p.91.

Kassapa V got the Mahādipāda Udaya to decide on the number of monks to reside in the hermitage, the mode of administration and the means of settling disputes.

EZ., I, pp.182-190

in the hands of the monks. Each monastery was headed by a Nevāsika Mahāthera (Resident Chief Monk) who was responsible for the smooth running of the monastery and was in turn supervised by the king who was the ultimate head of the entire complex. The fact that there was no central body or individual (like the later Saṅgharāja¹) who was the head of the ecclesiastical order enabled the king to have a very close supervisory control over the individual monasteries and to occupy a place of paramount importance even in religious matters, where his voice prevailed.

The king played a prominent role in carrying out acts of purification of the saṅgha and also lent his patronage to ceremonies of Admission and Ordination.²

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1. Diṃbulāgala Kassapa, who was chosen to head the saṅgha at the purification enacted by Parākramabāhu I (1153-1186), was the first Saṅgharāja. Under his leadership, the entire saṅgha came to be administered and all ecclesiastical functions controlled from a central organization. However, the title Saṅgharāja came into use only during the Gampala period.

See Y.Dhammavisuddhi, The Buddhist Saṅgha in Ceylon (circa 1200-1400), Unpublished Ph.D thesis, London, 1970.

2. For a detailed account see R.A.L.H. Gunawardana, The history of the Buddhist saṅgha... pp.252ff.

A considerable amount of state wealth was spent on religious festivals and ceremonies.¹ and king's participation in such religious functions would have become a unifying force helping to weld the three way relationship between respectively the king and saṅgha, the king and the laity and the saṅgha and the laity.

We may now examine the nature and the extent to which the representatives of the king intervened in the implementation of the regulations. In cases of quarrels and disputes among monks, if the monks in the monastery were not successful in bringing about a settlement, the royal officials were to inquire into the matter, together with the monks and impose punishment.² When a situation

1. See Ibid., pp.254,255.

2. Anurādhapura Slab-Inscription of Kassapa V,
 "If an act of misconduct, such as a tumultuous dispute, arise amongst destitute (?) masters of religious ceremonies, recipients of benefits [from temple property, or] among those who have received cells [to live in], the monks of the [Kapārā?] Mūla [fraternity] shall sit [in council] and settle [the dispute]; if the monks cannot settle it, they shall hold a conference with the princes, and due investigation being made, shall decide [the case] and impose punishment according to merit." EZ., 1,p.54

such as the refusal by monks to partake of their gruel arose¹, royal officials were to act as mediators and persuade them to take the gruel but no compulsion was to be used. However, the royal order remained supreme. (This incidentally points to a use of satyagraha almost identical to the twentieth century form as a political weapon.)

Judiciary rights, were undoubtedly vested in the king. However, monks enjoyed the right of jurisdiction over minor disputes and quarrels. The state retained the authority to hold jurisdiction and punish criminals in cases of grave offences.

The misappropriation of monastic wealth was another matter that was referred to the royal officials. They were to hold investigations into such matters and those who were found guilty were expelled.²

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1. "If there be a dispute in respect of the monks' refusal of gruel (hambu āmā karana vivādayak āta), the princes shall be sent to reconcile the monks and induce them to partake of the gruel, but no compulsion shall be exercised to make them accept it." EZ., 1,p.55
 2. EZ., 1,p.57. "Monks who have appropriated for themselves any article (pasaya, P.paccayo) whatever that is inside or outside the [Kapārā] pirivena, except those requisites (pasaya) assigned to them as recipients of cells [for their maintenance], shall be expelled from the cells, after due investigation has been made thereof by the nobles."

The king who was at the apex of the administration of the monasteries had to protect the interests of the saṅgha from the intrusion of even the royal bureaucracy (as opposed to the monastic bureaucracy). This is evidenced in the declarations made to the effect that the royal officials were not to be bribed¹, in expectation of favours in return. The supervisory control of the king over the administration of the monasteries on an organized scale would have undoubtedly enhanced the authority of the king over the saṅgha which was up to this time limited to acts of purification of the saṅgha and the performance of religious ceremonies etc.

The foregoing discussion indicates that by the ninth and tenth centuries, the king virtually came to be recognized as the head of the church, on both symbolical and political level, though not a thera. It is natural that the king made an attempt to retain this unequalled position in the Buddhist Social Order. It is against this background that the proclamation made by Mahinda IV, (982-1029AD) that "none but the Bodhisattvas would become kings

1. Jetavanārāma Sanskrit Inscription, EZ., I, pp.4-5.

of Ceylon" could be explained.

We may quote here the relevant section in the inscription:¹

"The regulation thus enacted should always be maintained with due respect by the descendants of our dynasty, with Kṣatriya Lords devoted to the Buddha, who (of yore) have received the assurance (made by) the omniscient Lord of the Sages, the pinnacle of the Sākya race, that none but Bodhisattvas would become kings of prosperous Laṅkā; who are wont to wear the white scarf to serve and attend on the great community of monks on the very day they celebrate the coronation festival after attaining to the dignity of kingship, bestowed by the great

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1. "... Vivāda harnā koṭ me tubūtāk sirit at
 kulādātiya kārā siri La(k-hi) no bosat-
 hu no raj-vanhayi Sāhā-kula kot Savāniya-muni-raj-hu
 (viyāraṇ) lad tumā pay sivur rak (nu-va)s
 maha-saṅg-hu piḷivāyū raj-si-ri pämiṇā sänā bisev
 vindna (da)vas maha-[sa]ṅg-haṭ meheyaṭ uvasar-vas
 (sevel) bandna apa parapuren (basna) Buḍ bāti
 Kāt-usabna-visin (nira)- (-tur ādur) ātiyā-vānu
 räkiyā yutu ... " EZ.I, p.237.

community of monks for the purpose of defending the bowl and the robe of the Buddha."¹

The statement that none but Bodhisattvas would become kings of Ceylon was cited as assurance made by the Buddha himself in order to heighten its authenticity. The impact of the statement becomes all the more significant because the inscription was found within the precincts of a monastery. This does reflect the unique status held by the king as the head of the political as well as religious affairs of the country, a status well recognized by the saṅgha. However, it is also mentioned in the above quoted inscription that the saṅgha conferred 'formally' the dignity of kingship on the king, and it was incumbent on the latter to promote the welfare of the former and provide protection for them from the very day of coronation. This implies that the saṅgha had the power to make the appointment of kings. But it should be noted that the saṅgha often sanctioned the traditional

1. EZ., I, p.240. R.A.L.H. Gunawardane has rightly pointed out that the translation 'bowl and the robe of the Buddha' was wrong and it should be 'bowls and robes of monks' See R.A.L.H. Gunawardane, The History of the Buddhist Saṅgha p.249.

succession and in fact only in very few instances was the saṅgha consulted in the selection of a king, and this was in cases of disputed succession.¹

The position of kingship could never be rivalled by the saṅgha. Owing to the vast powers of the king, specially those in conferring wealth and immunities to the monasteries as well as the necessary protection, it was in the interest of the saṅgha to maintain good relations with the king. Besides, the division of the saṅgha into rival factions and the absence of a single

1. On the death of Saddhātissa (137-119 B.C.), Thūlatthana was appointed to the throne, ignoring the eldest son, Lañjatissa, with the consent of the monks. (Mv., 33, 17-18). According to the Cūlavamsa (Chap. 61, 1-4) after the death of Vijayabāhu I (1055-1110 A.D.) the king's sister, her three sons, ministers and the saṅgha unanimously conferred kingship on Jayabāhu overlooking Vikramabāhu, the king's son. Vīdāgama Mahāthera at the beginning of the fifteenth century gave Prince Parākrama and his mother protection against Vīra Alakeśvara and finally installed him on the throne. (Rājāvaliya, p. 48.)

leader¹ of the saṅgha weakened its power.

Gunawardana² contended that, as the administration of monasteries became more and more complex, there was a "gradual abdication of the king's economic rights and political authority". We think, on the contrary, with the formalization of the bureaucratic structure and also the concurrent development of the Bodhisattva ideology, secular and religious aspects of kingship were strengthened and consequently the king was placed on a stronger footing.

In this respect, we should not look at the king and the saṅgha as rival seats of power but as a joint system of power which held sway over the inhabitants of the Island, in many spheres of their lives. These spheres of dominations included the land they tilled (which was sometimes owned by the king and sometimes by the saṅgha) as well as the sphere of ideology which legitimated such domination.

1. Even under a single leader (Saṅgharāja) or after the unification of the saṅgha there was no threat to the king's power. There was no tendency on the part of the religious leaders to assume temporal power, as happened in Tibet.

2. R.L.H. Gunawardana, The History of the Buddhist sangha. p.282.

This joint power system evidently provided a very efficient system of domination. Thus to quote Gunawardana: "The influential position that the monks held in the society suited them to the role of mediators among kings as well as commoners. They were the advisers who enjoyed the respect and confidence of the laity"¹ and also: "A considerable amount of the wealth of the state was used for the patronage of the Order and for the performance of religious rites."²

In this connection, we are not inclined to go with Gunawardana when he says: "The interdependence of the saṅgha and the king seems to have been an important factor which maintained the balance of power in the Sinhalese society by preventing either from extending its authority."³

In our view, the joint system of domination was useful to both king and saṅgha in the exercise of their

1. Ibid., p.237.

2. Ibid., p.254.

3. Ibid., p.252.

interests, vis-a-vis the general population. And thus an exercise of power by one member at the expense of the other which would naturally weaken the joint system of domination was in the long run to the detriment of both. Consequently exercise of power by one at the expense of the other has been rare and occurred only on a very few occasions.

Around this time, an attempt to elevate the position of the king to a status equal to the highest ranks of the Buddhist Order, namely that of the Buddha or Bodhisattva or Arhat, is evident in the use of terms like pirinivan¹ in reference to the decease of kings, viz. terms associated with Buddhas and Arhats hitherto. Some traces of this tendency were to be noticed from about the eighth century when strictly ecclesiastical terms like yat-himi² which in earlier times were used in reference only to the saṅgha came to be applied to kings, too.

It is not surprising that Mahinda IV made an attempt

1. EZ., V, pt.ii, p.185, Satalosāpiriniviyan vahanse

2. ^Rock Inscriptions at Rassahela EZ., IV, pp.173,174.

to arrogate to himself the claim of being a direct descendant of the Śākya clan, which would have made him a blood relative of the Buddha himself. A fragmentary Slab Inscription from the Jetavana monastery of the seventh year of a king identified as Mahinda IV describes the king as 'pinnacle of the illustrious Sāhā race, who is descended from the lineage of Okāvas, who has come down in the succession of the great king Sudovun and who is descended from the lineage of the great king Paṇḍuvasdev Abhā.'¹ This is a practice² that

1. EZ., III, p.228.

2. The practice of claiming descent from the Śākya clan had prevailed in other South and South East Asian Buddhist countries as well. Sroṅ-btsan-sgam-po of Tibet, according to the legendary accounts in the Mani-bkash-hbum, was a descendant of the mythical Śākya prince of gNah-K'ribtsan-po (alleged to be the son of King Prasenajit, Buddha's first royal patron) who came to Tibet in the fifth century B.C. (Waddell, Lamaism, p.19.f.n.1)

The last Burmese dynasty founded by a village headman in the eighteenth century claimed ancestry from the Śākya kings of Kapilavatthu. For a detailed account, see Robert Heine-Geldern, Conceptions of State and Kingship in South East Asia. Data Paper, No.18. South East Asia Program Dept. of Far Eastern Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. 1956. p.9

goes back to the Dīpavaṃsa and the Mahāvāṃsa, where Paṇḍukābhaya is said to be a descendent of the lineage of the Sākya Amitodana, a brother of Suddhodana, the father of the Buddha. A similar claim made by a king himself is found in the Mādirigiriya Pillar Inscription of Kassapa V (914-923 A.D.), where he claims descent from the lineage of Okāvas¹ of which the Sākya clan was a branch.

After Mahinda IV, the same claim is found in the Polonnaruwa Pillar Inscription and the Diṃbulāgala Inscription of the queen of Vikramabāhu I (1111-1132 A.D.)²

A tendency to put the king on a par with the Buddha was also present during this time. (A certain similarity in attributes alluded to both the king and the Buddha has existed from early times in Buddhist kingdoms under the well known concept of cakravartī.³ Buddha was described as a king and vice versa in Pali canonical and post canonical literature.⁴) The Polonnaruwa Galpota Slab-Inscription of

1. EZ., II, pp.25-33; Mv., 2, 11-12; P. Okkāka, Sk. Ikṣvāku was the ancestor of the solar race, to which Rāma and others belonged.

2. EZ., IV, p.64; II A 12-14; Vol. II, p.95, l.1.

3. See B.G. Gokhale, 'Early Buddhist kingship', Jnl. of Asian Studies, XXVI, pp. 15-22.

4. A., I, pp. 109-110; D., III, p.95

Niśśaṅka Malla (1187-1196 A.D.) says:

"The appearance of an impartial king should be welcomed as the appearance of the Buddha."¹

Thus the respect that the kings commanded during this era became more and more associated with a certain religious aura.²

By the time of Niśśaṅka Malla, the political scene had a period of vast changes in the country, due to the Coḷa occupation, the liberation from the Coḷas by Vijayabāhu I, and the political and religious unification brought about by Parākramabāhu I. The type of political action pursued by Niśśaṅka Malla to strengthen his position was twofold: on the one hand he counteracted the constant threat from South Indian powers and on the other, he asserted his position as king against the growing power of the local chiefs and of the saṅgha. This led him to make propaganda for himself and his dynasty on an organized scale. It can

1. EZ., II p.113.

Māṇḍahat rajun lābim budun lābīm se (sālakiya yutu) yā:

2. The development of this trend is later seen in the funeral rites conducted at the death of kings. The description of the funeral ceremony given to Vijayabāhu III (1232-1236 A.D.) suggests that the king was treated like a religious dignitary. His body was cremated within the precincts of a monastery and a stūpa was constructed on site of the pyre. See Hatthavanagallavihāravaṃsa p.32

be contended that the best example of using religion as a political weapon in the history of Ceylon was displayed by Niśśaṅka Malla.

We observed in the foregoing pages how the Bodhisattva ideal came to be used as an ideological tool and how the trends of the time reflected the identification of the king with the highest ranks of the Buddhist Order. It was, however, Niśśaṅka Malla who put these religio-political ideas to maximum use.

The concept of the Bodhisattva king had become a living tradition by this time as is evidenced in the Prīti-Dānaka-Maṇḍapa rock Inscription, Polonnaruva:

"... Through the courts of justice, he suppressed injustices in many places. And with the object that the people whom he had thus made prosperous might not be ruined by wrong conduct, he set up in his capital moral edicts engraved on stone. (Moreover) thinking, 'I will show myself in my (true) body which is endowed with benevolent regard for and attachment to the virtuous qualities of a Bodhisattva king, who like a parent, protects the

world and the religion',¹ and seeing that the inhabitants of the threefold kingdom (of Ceylon) were in distress, His Majesty decided, 'I will give them wealth equal to that of kings', and bestowing on them gold and silver vessels, pearls, precious stones and various other wealth made every one happy..."²

It is also evident from the above quotation that Niśśaṅka Malla emphasized the paternal attitude- an idea that was always there, by which he made a deliberate attempt to appeal to the emotions of the people.

In the Polonnaruwa Galopota Inscription,³ he states:

"Though kings appear in human form, they are human divinities and must therefore be regarded as Gods."⁴

This statement reflects the well known Indian idea of divinity of kingship which was prevalent from the very

1. Mavu-piyan-se lo-sasun raknā bodhi-satva-rāja-gunayata (met-sitāti sne)ha paksa-pāta śarīrayen-mā pāmhai".

2. EZ., II, pp.175-176.

3. EZ., II, p.113.

4. naradevatā heyin deviyan-se dākkā yutuyā.

time the institution of kingship was known¹. Whatever the means was, the underlying motive of Niśśaṅka Malla was to command the deepest respect from his subjects for a smooth running of the affairs of the state. The same idea is found in the Polonnaruwa Slab Inscription at the North gate of the citadel:

"Then perceiving that utter destruction forthwith befalls the wealth, nay the very tribe, of the wicked ones who work evil against kings in ignorance of the greatness of their virtues - kings who stand as Gods in human form and as parents to the world, His Majesty determined that such destruction should not befall anyone."²

In fact, Niśśaṅka-Malla played the role of the spiritual mentor of even the monks. In the fragmentary Hāṭa-dā-ge inside wall-inscription, he advises the monks on the recruitment of new monks.

"The venerable ones, who are in the position

1. Cf. e.g. Mahābhārata, 13,152,16; Manu-Smṛti, 9,315f; Agni-purāṇa, 225, 16ff. See for details, J. Gonda, Ancient Indian kingship from the religious point of view, Leiden, 1966.

2. EZ., II, No.28, p.164.

of ... teachers and spiritual preceptors, should not, without inquiry, robe foolish, sinful persons who are false and crafty. They should do no improper thing [contrary to] ... taught by the Buddha. The guise of a śramana adopted without the virtues (of one) is ... [and] the partaking of food (belonging to another) while one leads an immoral life ... in hell."¹

In the Rankot-vehera Inscription, he gives spiritual guidance to the monks:

"Prosperity! It is well if gentlemen (kulaputrayan visin) who pursue a course [of discipline] in the Order of the Buddha which, for the denizens of the whole world, is like unto a field [for the sowing of the seeds] of meritorious actions, avoiding evil beings who are hateful and crafty, not neglecting the [two] obligations [of the study] of the scriptures and introspection (granthavidarśanā dhurayehi nopamā), diffusing kindness towards all beings by engaging in the cultivation of Love, Compassion and

1. EZ., II p.98.

other subjects of Meditation and [thus] not neglecting the protection of Society and Religion, as well as the protection of one's own self, ensure the attainment of heaven to those who, with a believing heart, attend upon them with the four requisites [of a monk], and live in such wise that there will be the attainment of Nirvāna in the end."¹

The manner in which Niśśaṅka Malla used religion as a deliberate ideological weapon displays a high sense of political campaigning. His political moves were accompanied on the spiritual level by these appeals to the religious sentiments of the subjects. Emphasizing the non-Buddhistic aspect of the South Indian Kingdoms was the wisest step that could be taken to unite the people against foreign threats and also to strengthen his own position² as reflected in the following

1. EZ., V pt. 2, p.269.

2. By stating the above, we are not implying that Niśśaṅka Malla was a hypocrit and not a zealous convert to Buddhism. What is implied is that his religious ideological appeals even though arising from conviction helped to enhance his authority. This distinction, I believe is carried by the sociological categories of latent

statements¹.

"Just as pouring poison ... or planting poisonous trees where wish-conferring trees stood, people should not establish in the island of Laṅkā which belongs to the Kaliṅga dynasty, non-Buddhistic kings of Coḷa, Pāṇḍya etc. who are inimical to the religion of the Buddha"².

"Over the Island of Ceylon, which belongs to the religion of the Buddha, non-Buddhistic princes from Coḷa, Kerala, or other countries should not be chosen."³

The protection of the sāsana as the foremost duty of the kings was expressly declared in the Hāṭadāge Inscription.⁴ The Slab Inscription of Sāhasa Malla emphasizes

function and manifest function. In this case, Niśśaṅka Malla's manifest function was the spread of religious ideas from his religious conviction, the latent function was that it upheld his authority and domination over the kingdom.

1. The idea that the king of the Island should be a Buddhist and that no non-buddhist dynasty would be able to consolidate their authority was often voiced in many literary works. Pjv., p.49; Srtnk., p.393.

2. Galpota Slab Ins. Polonnaruva, EZ., II. No.17.

3. Slab Inscription at the North-gate of the citadel. EZ., II, No.28. p.164.

4. EZ., II. p.122.

the inseparable link between the king and Buddhist religion.

"A kingdom without a king, like a ship without a steersman, would not endure, like a day without the sun, it would be lustreless, and the Buddhist religion without the 'wheel of the law' would be devoid of support."¹

Kingship as an absolute and essential factor for the welfare of human beings was emphasized more than ever before, and every effort was made to keep the power within the Kalinga dynasty and break down the rising local chiefs. This is well recorded in the Polonnaruwa Galpota Slab Inscription:

"In accordance with the maxim ... they should elect for kingship the sons of ... kings (namely the princes holding the office of) 'āpā mahapā, even though they be minors, for they are the lords of the world, and thus they should maintain family customs ... If there are no princes, they should maintain (the kingdom) by submitting themselves to the sway of the queens. If

1. EZ., II, p.227.

there are no queens also, they should place in the position of king even a slipper worn on the feet of a great king and protect the kingdom..."¹

After the period of Niśśaṅka Malla, it was during the reign of Parākramabāhu II (1236 A.D.) that the use of Buddhism as a political ideology again surfaces, and here, the ideal of the Bodhisattva king was not only well recognized but also the implications involved in the process of attaining Buddhahood in a future birth were given much consideration, as vividly depicted in the contemporary Pūjāvaliya. The ideal was not limited to the king; it was the model of conduct for the minister Deva-patirāja and the author of the Pūjāvaliya himself.²

However, Bodhisattva as a title of a king appears for the first time, only when Vijayabāhu IV (1271 A.D.), the son of Parākramabāhu II was known as 'Bodhisatta Vijayabāhu' in the Cūlavamsa.³ He was popularly known

1. EZ., II.p.122. Cf. Rāmāyana, CXV, 14-18, Bombay edition, Ayodhyākaṇḍa.

2. See p.130 f.

3. Amhākam adhunā bodhisatto Vijayabāhuko Rājadhāniṃ Pulatthivham kāretum kira gacchatī. Cv., 88.35.

Also: Tadā kho bodhisattassa putto Vijayabāhuno Nattā tassa Parakkantibāhurañño mahiddhino. Cv., 90.48

by the Sinhalese term 'Bosat Vijayabāhu'.¹ Later kings were referred to by the title 'Bodhisattva', for instance Parākramabāhu VI (1412 A.D) was known as 'Bodhisattva Parākramabāhu'.²

The Oruvala Sannasa reads:

"...our great Bodhisattva Parākramabāhu who wore his crown fifty five times in Ceylon acquired merit, became a cakravarti king in this auspicious universe and in the end attained supramundane Buddhahood..."³

Parākramabāhu VI appears to have lived up to this image as reflected in some of the fifteenth century literary works. The Hamsa Sandeśaya⁴ and the Kāvyaśekharaya⁵ extol his Bodhisattva virtues. The Daṁbadeni Asna⁶ refers to him as one who perfected Bodhisambhāras.

1. Srtmk., p.315; Ns., p.21; Rājaratnākaraya, p.43.

2. EZ., III, p.66.

3. "... ape maha Bodhisattva Parākrama Bāhu maha rājot-tamayāṇanvahanse pas-panas oṭuṇu Laṁkāve pālaṇḍa pin koṭa me maṅgul sakvaḷa cakravaḷa cakravartti-raja-va keḷavara maha bo vaḍā lovuturā Budu bava siddhavanāhu nam veti..." EZ., III, p.67.

4. Vv.31-36.

5. V. 8.

6. Kuveni Asna, Sihabā Asna, Daṁbadeni Asna, ed. Kirālle Gñānawimala, Colombo, 1960, p.30.

The Saddharmaratnākara calls Parākramabāhu VI Buddhaṅkura (literally Buddha shoot), a nascent Buddha.

"...the great king Parākramabāhu, the nascent Buddha, the sovereign of Tri Siṃhala, the chief of nine jewels, who is endowed with valour, power and heroism..."¹

The idea that the king was a Bodhisattva incarnate (Bodhisattvāvatāra) was developed during the fifteenth century. The Oruvala Sannasa refers to king Parākramabāhu VI as Bodhisattvāvatāra.

"...His Majesty our king Mahā Parākrama Bāhu, sovereign of Tri Siṃhala and an incarnate Bodhisattva, had worn the crown fifty-five times..."²

The term avatāra which denotes a manifestation of a god in Hinduism³ was apparently added to the Bodhisattva

1. "...Buddhaṅkura vū trisiṃhalādhiśvara navaratnādhipati śaurabalaparākramānvita parākramabāhu mahārajāṇaṇṭa..."

Srtmk., p.75

2. "...apage rājādhirāja-vū Tri Siṃhalādhiśvara Bodhisattvāvatāra Mahā Parākrama Bāhu vāda vun tena oṭunu pas-panas dharana..." EZ., III, p.66.

3. Cf. Geoffrey Parrinder, Avatar and incarnation, London, 1970.

concept around the fifteenth century. It should be remembered that this was a time when the worship of Hindu gods was dominant in Buddhism and as a result, the fusion of Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas into Hindu gods was occurring.¹

Before concluding this section, we would like to cite here the view held by Geiger on the treatment of the Bodhisattva ideal as an aspect of kingship as depicted in the chronicles.

"The chronicles must admit that pious kings could be on the way to become Buddhas in a future existence. I think that this was a concession to the Mahāyānists who attributed such a quality to certain rulers and it was made to them by the Theravādians in order not to disturb the good relations between church and royalty."²

He adds that up to the thirteenth century, the time the first part of the Cūlavamsa was completed, the chronicles seem to have accepted the new ideal only half-heartedly, in that the kings are said to have aspired to

1. See Chap.5.

2. CCMT. p.211.

Buddhahood or lived the life of Buddhas but the title of Bodhisattva was never directly given to a single king, until the time the second part of the Cūlavamsa was written, i.e. fourteenth century. In making this statement Geiger here assumes that the theoretical manifestation of the ideal of the Bodhisattva as an ideology of kingship was an import to Ceylon which the Mahāyānists were trying to impose on the Theravādins and not an indigenous feature.

As we have seen, our studies suggest that though the ideal of the Bodhisattva as a part of the doctrine of Mahāyāna was an import to Ceylon, the Bodhisattva cult as an ideology of kingship developed naturally, as a typical response of the marriage of religious ideological factors with political ones. We have mentioned earlier that the king and the saṅgha provided a joint system of domination over the rest of the population. The Bodhisattva cult is seen as a factor of kingship developed to help sustain this joint domination. In this light, naming a king Bodhisattva could help in increasing the legitimacy of his authority to rule over his subjects, who we presume were devoted Buddhists. We may, however, note in passing that, for instance, the Mahāvamsa

which we may take to be the official voice of the saṅgha has not only extolled kings for their qualities of personableness. It was more the rule for the authors of the Mahāvamsa to describe the kings they looked on with favour by giving a list of their gifts given to the saṅgha either as land or religious buildings. Only rarely are kings extolled for their personal qualities apart from their generosity toward the saṅgha.

We may in this concluding section pose the following questions with respect to the development of the Bodhisattva cult in kingship in Ceylon. Is one a Bodhisattva just by virtue of being a king or rather is being a Bodhisattva a kind of prerequisite of being a king? Were only some virtuous kings regarded as Bodhisattvas? Or were all kings expected to behave like Bodhisattvas?

In answering these questions, we should note that even during the era from the twelfth to the fifteenth century when several kings were being designated as Bodhisattvas, every king was not designated so. Thus Niśsaṅka Malla, Parākramabāhu II, Vijayabāhu IV, Parākramabāhu VI are referred to as Bodhisattvas but there is no evidence to show that the other kings who lived during the period were so referred to. Therefore the

fact of being a king did not guarantee the title 'Bodhisattva' and conversely being a Bodhisattva was not a prerequisite of being a king.

It appears that only some virtuous kings were regarded as Bodhisattvas but obviously all virtuous kings were not considered so. There were kings of the tenth to the fifteenth centuries who are extolled as virtuous in the Cūlavamsa but were not considered Bodhisattvas, for example Vijayabāhu I, Parākramabāhu I, Parākramabāhu III, Bhuvanekabāhu II. We may reasonably assume that the kings who were designated Bodhisattvas were expected to behave as Bodhisattvas. However, we should point out that they did not always do so; Sena I who is referred to as having aspired to Buddhahood is recorded as having killed his kinsman.

The Bodhisattva cult in other lands.

We may now examine briefly the extent to which kingship in South East Asia was associated with the Bodhisattva ideal. This area is of special importance to a study of Sinhalese Buddhism as these lands later became converted to the Buddhism of the Ceylon variety.

To begin with Ceylon, we have observed that though

some of the concepts associated with the Bodhisattva king were present among the Ceylon kings as an incipient ideology from very early times i.e. fourth century, a direct proclamation that a king is required to be a Bodhisattva is met with only during the time of Mahinda IV (956-972 A.D.). We have also observed how the growing interest in Mahāyāna ideas, linked with the practical need to consolidate the king's power in order to maintain peace and welfare in the country, prompted this king to make this open declaration. It is significant that this is the earliest record of Bodhisattva kingship in the whole of South and South East Asia.¹

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1. Sroṅ-btsan-sgam-po of Tibet (circa 609-649 A.D.) was canonised latterly as an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and his two wives as incarnations of Tārā. It was only with the intention of bestowing the highest veneration in retrospect on one of the greatest kings of Tibet, who was the patron of civilization and Buddhism, that he was later canonised as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, the highest respected Bodhisattva among the Tibetans. The theory of re-incarnate Lamas originated only around the 15th century, as examined by Waddel. (Lamaism, p.229)

A Bodhisattva ideal of kingship similar to that of Ceylon was also practised in Burma and Thailand. Sarkisyanz has attempted to give a description of the Bodhisattva ideal of Burmese kingship and how it derived from concepts current in mediaeval Ceylon. He states:

"Aspirations toward the attainment of future Buddhahood, [purha lon = paya laun:] aspirations to be born as the future Buddha Mettaya, whose coming had been foretold by the Buddha Gautama, the aspiration to bring a state of society that prophecies associated with Mettaya, became an ideal that Burmese kingship inherited from mediaeval Ceylon. It meant a rationalization and idealization of kingship in a Buddhist sense. The ruler received through Buddhism the exemplary soteriological charisma of the Bodhisattva Mettaya, a being aspiring toward the liberation of all living beings from Samsāra. In this sense Burma's Buddhist kingship has formulated - particularly in its epigraphy - a soteriological rationalization of the State."¹

1. E. Sarkisyanz, Buddhist backgrounds of the Burmese revolution, The Hague, 1965, p.59

The epigraphic records that he presents as evidence are in reference to three kings - namely Kyanzittha (1084-1112 A.D.), Alaungsitthu (1112-1167 A.D.) and Hsinpyushin (1763-1776 A.D.). In the discussion below, we shall quote extracts from inscriptions Sarkisyanz has used as well as other inscriptions and relevant data referring to five other kings which have a bearing on the Bodhisattva kingship in Burma. We will also show that although the Bodhisattva kingship in Burma was in a well developed form and was very probably received from Ceylon, it did not generally refer to any particular Bodhisattva as Maitreya as Sarkisyanz contends.

Sarkisyanz quotes the following extracts from Kyanzittha's inscriptions which reflect the Bodhisattva ideal of kingship prevalent in Burma.

"As by the lord Buddha was foretold, so has all come to pass. The King of the Law, who was foretold by the lord Buddha, who is great in love and compassion toward all beings, to the end that all beings may obtain happiness and bliss..."¹

1. Kyanzittha's Myakan Inscription, in: Epigraphia Birmanica, Vol. II, Part i Rangoon, 1921, p.142.

"... The pious gifts that king made ..., building monasteries, or digging tanks, or planting groves ... only that all beings might escape out of Samsāra..."¹

"... King Śrī Tribhuvanādityadhammarāja ... in his final existence [before entering Nirvāṇa himself?] shall raise out of the Four ... [Forms of being] all ... the world, together with the devas [gods] that are immersed in Samsāra, which is even as an ocean that is devoid of shelter [or] a place of refuge, shall [he] lift into the good Law, which is even as the great ship [and] shall bring them to the heaven of exalted Nirvāṇa ... Thus did lord Buddha prophesy ..."2

"King Śrī Tribhuvanādityadhammarāja, the exalted mighty universal monarch, who rides upon a white elephant, the omniscient one, the Bodhi-sattva, who shall verily become a Buddha that saves and redeems all beings, who is great in love and compassion for all beings at all times, who upholds the religion of the lord Buddha, who is exalted above all other kings ... over the Four Quarters ..., who has wisdom and splendor exceeding other kings All good men understand that this is indeed the king of the Law [Dhammarāja] who was foretold by the lord Buddha, who is to become a

1. Ibid., I, ii, p.166.

2. Ibid., I, ii, p.122.

true Buddha ..."¹

Sarkisyanz also quotes the following inscription dated 1131 A.D. in order to demonstrate the "Theravada Buddhist royal ideal of aspiring towards future Buddhahood" observed by Kyanzittha's successor, Alaungsitthu.

"As this great being has fulfilled the Ten Perfections
 And attained omniscience,
 Releasing all from bondage,
 So may I fulfill the Ten Perfections and attain
 Omniscience
 And loose the bonds of all
 ... Whatever boon I seek,
 It is the best of boons, to profit all
 By this abundant merit I desire
 Here nor hereafter no angelic pomp ...
 nor the state and
 Splendours of a monarch,
 'By merit of this act I would behold
 Mettaya, captain of the world, endued
 With two and thirty emblems, where he walks
 Enhaloed on a rainbow pathway fair,
 ... and sets free
Samsāra's captives by his holy word

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1. Kyanzittha's Mon Inscription from an uncertain pagoda in the Mon earea, dated 1098 A.D., in: Epigraphia Birmanica, I, ii, p.146. For more inscriptions of Kyanzittha that express the wish for Buddhahood See Epi.Birm., I, ii, pp.117f; II, ii, pp.141f.

..... till clad in virtue's eight,
 Informed by such a teacher I become
 A Buddha in the eyes of spirits and man
 ... O might I thus
 Compass a Buddha's duties and attain
 ... [Nirvāṇa] lavish of abounding bliss."¹

A Pali inscription which according to Luce is most likely to be of Īm-taw-syañ (1165 A.D.) reads:

"Siri Tribhuvanāditya-varadhamma, Lord of the Quarters, made this image of the Buddhas with the object of attaining perfect enlightenment..."²

Panpwat Sañ mliiy who was later known as Taruk pliy (1255 A.D.) expressly stated that he was a Bodhisattva. When he was requested to give back to the monks a land confiscated by a certain regional chief, he made the following royal order:

"As I am a Bodhisattva myself, I should never take them. How could I confiscate them? (If they were already seized), I dedicate them to the Lords. Let them do what they like with them. Let not the land of the Three Gems enter our land. There could be no sin if our land enters the land of the Three Gems. You put up permanent pillars to demarcate

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1. The Shwegugyi Pagoda Inscription with a translation [from Pali] by G.H.Luce and Pe Maung Tin, in: Burma Res.Soc., Fiftieth Anniversary Publications, No.2 Rangoon, 1960, pp.379,382-384.
 2. G.H.Luce, Old Burma-Early Pagan, Vol.I, p.118.

the land of the Lords."¹

An inscription written in reference to a peace mission headed by the Burmese monk Disāprāmuk who went to China in 1285 A.D. to plead with the Chinese king Kublai Khan not to invade Pagan reflects the ideal of kingship established at the time.

"O! King, are you not one who prays for the boon of Buddhahood? Grant that the religion of Father Kotama be not destroyed. The kingdoms that you, O King, have conquered are very many and very great. Tampratit kingdom is small, a mere appendage. Because there is the religion, the Bodhisattva prefer (?) the kingdom. Let not the soldiers enter yet! As for me, I shall first plant rice and beans. When the rice and beans are full grown, then enter!"²

When Alompra emerged victorious in 1752 after a phase of political disturbances for over a decade, he

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1. Maung Than Tun, 'Mahākassapa and his tradition', Paper read at the Ramakrishna Mission Society meeting held on 29.8.1959, Kyi, p.19.
 2. Maung Than Tun, The Buddhist church in Burma during the Pagan period 1044-1287, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1955, p.79.

proclaimed himself king of Burma assuming the title of Alaungpaya or "the Great Lord who shall be a Buddha one day."¹ This period brought about a national and religious revival; the king took the initiative in bringing back the lost religious glory; the court observed the uposatha days.² The citizens hailed the benevolent king as a Bodhisattva as is reflected in the Sāsanavamsa.

Sakala-Maramma-ratthavāsino ca ayam amhākam
rājā Bodhisatto ti vohārimsu. ³

However, the king appears to have used the Bodhisattva ideal of kingship as a slogan for political ends. During his invasion of Siam, Alaungpaya declared that as a future Buddha he intended to spread the dhamma in Siam, and demanded on these religious grounds that Siam should surrender.⁴ Alaungpaya also massacred more than four thousand of his Manipuri prisoners because they

1. G.E. Harvey, History of Burma, London, 1925, p.160.

2. Sāsanavamsa, ed. Mabel Bode, PTS, London, 1897, p.123.
Also see Niharranjan Ray, An introduction to the study of Theravāda Buddhism in Burma, Calcutta, 1946, pp.225f.

3. Sāsanavamsa, p.123.

4. Koun: baun-ze' Maha Yazawin-to-gyi, Mandalay, 1905,
p.315

refused to be taken as captives.¹

Hsinpyushin (1763-1776 A.D.), the second son of Alompra, whose forces invaded Siam and destroyed the Siamese capital expressed the wish for Buddhahood as is evidenced in the Po-U-Daung inscription dated 1774 A.D.

"In virtue of this, my good deed, may I, in the future, become a Buddha, and be able to dispel the ignorance of a great many creatures immersed in ignorance, and may I finally reach the tranquil, transcendent, immutable, blissful, peaceful, and happy city, which is secure from danger of death rebirth and old age!

"During the period that intervenes between my present existence and my becoming a Buddha, may all my enemies flee on hearing about my might and power or by seeing my person; and during the same period, may good fortune be my lot, whenever my might and power is heard of or my person seen!

"For this, my good deed, may I become an Omniscient One, surpassing others in wisdom and ..."²

Hsinpyushin's wish for Buddhahood is also referred

1. Ibid., p.303. Also see G.E. Harvey, op.cit., p.239.

2. Po-U-Daung inscription tr. Taw Sein Ko, IA., 22, 1893, pp. 1f.

to in the Sāsanavamsa as paricitapāramipūññasambhāro¹
(he who practised the perfections and accumulated merits).

An instance where the Bodhisattva ideal was used to the extreme in Burma is seen during the reign of Bodawpaya, (1781-1819), the youngest son of Alompra. He built a vast number of shrines and monasteries but never won the good will of his subjects due to his extremely conceited and cruel nature. His biggest undertaking was to build the largest pagoda in the world, on which he spent a fabulous amount of money and labour. He left the palace and resided at the place where it was being built and announced that he was Buddha Metteyya.² However, the theras stood against the pretensions of the cruel king, upon which he returned to the palace as an ordinary monarch.³

1. Sāsanavamsa, p.

2. HB., III, pp.44,63; Vincente Sangermano, A description of the Burmese Empire, Rome 1833, pp.56,59; G.E. Hall (Editor), Michael Symes, Journal of his second Embassy to the court of Ava in 1802, London, 1955, pp.XXVIf, LXV.

3. As the reason to abandon the building of the pagoda, the Burmese chronicles give the fact that the king did so because of a prophesy to the effect that if the pagoda reaches completion, the country will be ruined. Also See Harvey, op.cit., p.276.

We have just examined the available data on the presence of the Bodhisattva ideal of kingship in Burma. It is apparent that such an ideal did exist. And as the first reference to this ideal occurs only after the introduction of Sinhalese Buddhism in 1057 A.D., we may reasonably conclude that the ideal was imported from Ceylon.¹ In the light of the data available on the Bodhisattva kingship in Burma it is difficult to accept Sarkisyanz's contention that as a rule Burmese kings identified themselves as Metteyya. There is however, one reference, that of Bodawpaya of the nineteenth century which we may point out as an exception to our observation. However, Bodawpaya's case came long after the original introduction of Sinhalese Buddhism to Burma. The manner in which king's claim was denounced both by the saṅgha and laity add corroborative evidence to our contention that the wish of the kings both in Burma and in Ceylon was to attain Buddhahood; not to become Buddha Metteyya in particular.

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1. It should be remembered that before the introduction of Sinhalese Buddhism from Ceylon, Burma was under the direct influence of Mahāyāna due to religious and cultural relations with East Bengal where Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna flourished. G.H.Luce, Old Burma, pp.12ff, 95ff.

We may also point out that Sarkisyanz's conclusion on the prevalence of "the royal ideal of aspiring to become Bodhisattva Metteyya" in Ceylon as well as in Burma was inspired by the following statement made by Paul Mus.

"Disons une fois de plus que le bouddhisme rigriste des couvents orthodoxes avec son idéal élevé mais étroit, ne pouvait réchauffer le zèle des rois picux en leur ouvrant d'aussi éclatantes perspectives eschantologiques que le Grand Vehi cule. Pour se maintenir auprès d'eux (et l'histoire Ceylan nous enseigne que ce n'a pas été sans luttes), il semble qu'il ait de bonne heure toléré - la comme ailleurs - une sorte de "bouddhisme royal", intermédiaire entre la stricte orthodoxie et la floraison mythologique qu'offrent les sūtra du mahāyāna(') On ne pouvait promettre à chacun des fidèles, ni même à chacun des membres de la famille royale qu'il deviendrait un Buddha, mais, à la rigueur, on ne donnait qu'une légère entorse aux textes en ouvrant secrètement au Roi lui-même la carrière de l'unique Buddha que le Petit Véhicule ait à attendre d'ici la fin de la période cosmique."¹

1. Paul Mus, "Baradudur, Les origines du stūpa et la

Paul Mus cited the following three instances from the chronicles as evidence for his argument:

- i. King Buddhādāsa named his eighty sons after the eighty disciples of the Buddha Gautama,¹
- ii. Kassapa V recited Abhidhamma being surrounded by bhikkhūs thereby resembling Metteyya at the head of the assembly of gods in Tusita heaven,²
- iii. Duṭṭhagāmaṇī and his brother were to be born as first and second disciples of Metteyya and his parents as parents of Metteyya.

Of the three instances cited, there is only the second that could be taken as the king's identity with Metteyya. A single instance as this does not warrant a generalization which Mus has come to and which Sarkisyanz has followed, namely that Ceylon kings aspired to become Bodhisattva Metteyya.

We have already observed that the cult of Maitreya was in a developed form and enjoyed immense popularity in Ceylon. We have also seen how the wish for Buddhahood

transmigration, *essai d'archéologie religieuse comparée*", BEFEO., 1933, p.728.

1. Cv., 37.177-178.

2. Ibid., 52. 47-49.

was expressed by kings, ministers, writers etc., in Ceylon. It was also noted that the general practice observed by a candidate for Buddhahood was to receive vivarana from Buddha Maitreya. An instance when a king in Ceylon specifically expressed the wish to become Buddha Maitreya is yet to be met.

The association of the king with the Bodhisattva cult in Thailand, too, portrays features which find their analogues and parallels in similar descriptions in Ceylon and Burma. In this connection, we may quote here Quaritch Wales who says:

"The conception of the king under, Hīnāyanism is obviously that he is a Bodhisattva or incipient Buddha, or else a cakravartin, and this belief which is still held by all orthodox Siamese Buddhists, is derived proximately from imitation of the great Sinhalese kings and is strengthened in the minds of the people by the evidence of the popular Indian Jātaka stories."¹

The earliest reference to the Buddhist conception

1. H.G. Quaritch Wales, Siamese state ceremonies, their history and function, London, 1931, p.31.

of kingship, (though the king does not express the wish for Buddhahood), occurs in an inscription of 1292 of Rāma Khamheng (1275-1317 A.D.) during whose rule the Siamese kingdom founded at Sukhodaya reached the zenith of its power after the liberation from the Khmer domination.

"During the lifetime of King Rama Khamheng the city of Sukhodaya has prospered. There are fish in its waters and rice in its rice-fields. The Lord of the country does not tax his subjects, who throng the roads leading cattle to market and ride horses on their way to sell them ... If commoners nobles, or chiefs have a dispute, the king makes a proper inquiry and decides the matter with complete impartiality. ... If the king captures warriors or enemy soldiers, he neither kills them nor beats them. ..."¹

The first instance where there is definite evidence of the influence of the Bodhisattva concept is as depicted in a Khmer inscription² of king Lo T'ai (Dhammarāja I)

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1. G. Coedès, The making of South East Asia, London 1966, p.144
 2. Text published in Lucien Fournereau, 'Le Siam Ancien,

also known as Śrī Sūryavaṃsa Rāma who ascended the throne of Sukhodaya in 1339 A.D. The king already well versed in Buddhism, and, desirous to appoint a Saṅgharāja in order to obtain religious instruction from an authentic source and to organize the Buddhist church in Siam sent a messenger to Ceylon. The arrival of the Saṅgharāja was accompanied by great pomp and veneration, and the king dedicated a gilded image of the Buddha, which was placed in the midst of the city. Subsequently he entered the Order upon which he made the explicit wish to become a Buddha in a future birth, and not a cakravartin or Brahma.

"As the consequence of this merit (which I have acquired) by thus adopting the religion of our Lord, the Buddha, I do not covet for power of a cakravartin, neither that of Indra, nor that Brahma. I only desire the power to become a Buddha so as to assist the beings to cross the three

Annales du Musée Guimet, tome 27 & tome 31, deuxième partie, I, pp.167-179. A revised edition and French trans. by G. Coedès in 'Documents sur la dynastie de Sukhodaya,' BEFEO., 1917, XVII, pp.25ff. and also Coedès, Les états hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie, Paris, 1948, pp. 368-369 and Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam, Bangkok, 1924-9, I, pp.107ff.

types of existence."¹

Another inscription in the Pali language describing the same event records that when the king abandoned the responsibilities of the state and took to robes, the earth trembled and other miracles appeared; this was the general custom associated with the career of a Bodhisattva. Dhammaniyāmo hi bodhisattāna kammani²

According to the same inscription, King Lo T'ai appears to have modelled his career on the conduct of the ten Bodhisattvas headed by Metteyya. Sampanno sampannapāramiguṇānam Ariyametteyyādinam dasannam bodhisattānam³

The king's deep desire for Buddhahood encouraged the king to lead an extremely virtuous life.

"He rules observing the ten royal precepts.

He is full of pity for his subjects ... If he seized people who are guilty of deceit and insolence ...
... who throw poison into his rice in order to

1. Translation of the French version, in Ibid., p.101.

2. BEFEO., 1917, XVII, p.30.

3. Ibid., p.30

cause his sickness or death, he never kills them, nor beats them. Instead he is merciful to all those who showed evil towards him. If ... he represses his heart and restrains his thoughts, it was because he desired to become a Buddha ... to lead all beings beyond the ocean of suffering of transmigration."¹

"He has compassion ... (he desires) to safeguard all the beings and lead them beyond the suffering of the transmigration ... guide the simple minded ... to liberate ..."²

Later, with the foundation of the new Thai kingdom of Ayudhya modelled after the traditions of Angkor rulers, the spiritual status of the king increased to a great degree and came to be more popularly recognized in that the king was conceived of as a living Buddha. The king was addressed as 'Our Master, the Holy Buddha' while the Crown Prince was known as Buddhāṅkura (Buddha sprout)³

1. BEFEO., 1917, XVII, pp.27f.

2. Recueil des ins ... p.97.

3. G. Coedès, The making of ..., p.146.

The king was also thought to have entered the nirvāṇa.¹ According to the Thai Palatine Law, a treatise written in 1358 A.D., the Crown Prince was known by the title Somdet nɔ phra phuttha čhao (most excellent bud of the Enlightened Lord).² Pa Mamuang inscription of 1361 A.D., also refers to a crown prince in the same manner.

"This prince Mahāsāmi is certainly a sprouting Buddha (Buddhām). So saying the people came to pay homage to the son of a king named Gāṃhen."³

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1. Phraratchphongsāwadan krung si Ayutthayā ... lae, Phongsawadan nu'a... Two royal chronicles of the Ayudhyā period by Luang Prasoetaksonnit and Phra Paramanuchit Chinorot, Thai Text, Bangkok, 1961. That this idea continued in later times is reflected in the following Siamese chronicle where every chapter ends with the statement that the king attained nirvāṇa. Phraratchphongsāwadan chabapphraratchhatlekha iem, the history of Siam, the royal chronicle, Rama IV (Mongkut), king of Siam, Thai text, Bangkok, 1914.
 2. H.G.Q. Wales, Ancient Siamese Government and Administration, New York, 1965, p.22. It is to be noted that even up to this day, one refers to oneself in Thailand as phuttha čhao in addressing the king or even a public audience.
 3. G. Coedès, Recueil des ... inscription 2.2.

The son of Rāma T'ibodi II (1491-1529 A.D.) was also known as Buddhānkura.¹

During the fifteenth century the influence of the devarāja cult of the Khmers fused harmoniously with the Bodhisattva idea of kingship which has prevailed up to this time in Thailand. Hindu rituals were observed in the court, especially on the occasion of the coronation when Śiva was believed to enter the person of the crowned king while the common people and Buddhist monks regarded the king as a Bodhisattva.²

A later king of Siam who claimed to be a Bodhisattva with a view to consolidating his power, was a leader of Chinese origin named P'raya Tak; (1767-1782A.D.) He acceded to the throne after forcing the Burmese out of the country and founded the new capital Bangkok. He declared that he was a future Buddha and with the intention of reorganizing the Church, he tried to impose his authority on the monks, upon which the latter showed their disapproval and deposed the king.³

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1. R.B. Smith, Siam or the history of the Thais from earliest times to 1569 A.D., Maryland, 1966, p.39.
 2. H.G.Q. Wales, Ancient Siamese Government...., pp.16,17.
 3. W.A.R.Wood, History of Siam from the earliest times to the year 1781, London, 1926, p.269.

It may also be mentioned that the Siamese images of the Buddha represent him with a flame-like crown called śirorot sometimes terminating in a spire, which very much resembles the crowns of the Siamese kings.¹ In this regard, Quaritch Wales² observes;

"I believe the modern Siamese crown to be comparatively a late attempt to combine the purely practical helmet-crown with the Buddhist śirotama or flame-shaped glory often represented in Buddhist images and paintings, and mentioned in the Mahāvamsa."³

This he sees as an attempt by Siamese kings to imitate the splendour of Parākramabāhu during whose reign the influence of Sinhalese Buddhism was dominant in Siam. As further evidence of the association of symbols of royalty with those of the Buddha, Wales quotes the following from the Siamese life of Buddha:

"On his (Buddha's) head there is a śirorot

1. HB., III, p.89.

2. Siamese state ceremonies, p.97.

3. Mv., v.92 The Buddha "adorned with the crown of flames".

like a glorious angelic crown, in imitation of which all the kings of the world have made crowns a sign of royal dignity."¹

It is significant that the Bodhisattva cult assumed different forms depending on the religious and cultural milieu of the particular country. The case of Cambodia displays interesting phases that the cult went through, intermingling with the existing local religious beliefs and traditions.

During the times of Jayavarman II (780-834 A.D.) the first king of the Angkor dynasty whose reign marks the close of an obscure period in the history of Cambodia, a royal cult called the worship of devarāja was constituted. The devarāja cult² represented a good example

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1. Henry Alabaster, Wheel of the Law Buddhism illustrated from Siamese sources by the modern Buddhist. A life of Buddha, London, Edinburgh, 1871, p.207.
 2. Paranavitana attempted to show that a 'devarāja cult' based on the god Kuvera existed in Ceylon in the fifteenth century at Sīgiriya, the abode of the parricide Kāśyapa. His argument has not been convincing and has been subsequently criticised as being based on insufficient evidence. We have not discussed the case of a possible 'Ceylon devarāja' in our earlier treatment of the Ceylon Bodhisattva cult because, unlike the case of Cambodia, there is no evidence

of the use of religion to bolster political authority and strengthen the hold of the king on the population. Jayavarman II brought about an innovation in the worship of the Śivalinga, the phallic emblem of Śiva, in that the Śivalinga was made the symbol of the king's power, a sort of identification of the king with Śiva which he called the devarāja. The Khmer equivalent of this term "Kamraten jagat ta rāja" which means 'the god who is the king' or more explicitly Kamraten jagat ta rājya, 'the god who is the kingdom.'¹

whatsoever that the Ceylon devarāja cult even if it existed, gave rise to the Bodhisattva cult in Ceylon. This is different from the case in Cambodia where this cult gave way directly to the Bodhisattva cult. Further the presumed devarāja in Ceylon was Kuvera while in Cambodia and other South East Asian lands it was Śiva, a much higher divinity than Kuvera, and who due to his high position among the gods could be identified with the king. See S. Paranavitana, 'Sīgiri, the abode of a godking', JRASC.B., 1950, pp.129-162. Comment by P.E.E. Fernando & D.E. Hettiarachchi, Ibid., pp.165-169. Also see S. Paranavitana, 'Some aspects of the divinity of the king in ancient India and Ceylon', Proc. & Trans. All India Oriental Conference 16th session, University of Lucknow, Oct.1951, Vol.2, Lucknow, 1955, Section 8, No.28, pp.217-232.

1. G.Coedès - 'Note sur l'apothéose au Cambodge' Bulletin de

The King-God was conceived to be the eternal abstract essence of the king confounded with the divine essence and worshipped in the form of a liṅga, under the vocable of the first part of a king's name plus īśvara.¹

It seems that the devarāja is not the deified sovereign but rather the permanent essence of kingship (rājyasāra) which is identified with the 'subtle soul' (sūkṣmāntarātman) of each successive ruler, and

la Commission Archéologique de l'Indochine, 1911,

In this connection, we may also point out J. Filliozat's argument that the term devarāja should be understood to mean 'king of the gods' i.e. Śiva. See J. Filliozat, 'New Researches on the relations between India and

Cambodia', Indica, 3, 1966, pp. 100-102; also K. Bhattacharya. Les religions brahmaniques dans l'ancien Cambodge d'après l'épigraphie et l'iconographie. Publications de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient, Vol. XLIX, Paris, 1961.

1. L.P. Briggs, The Ancient Khmer Empire, p. 90 'Jayeśvara' is not met with in any inscription. The first record of this type of name is found during the time of Indravarman (877-899 A.D.). However, Jayavarman received the posthumous name of Parameśvara.

sometimes symbolized by an image.¹ However spiritual and religious the cult of the devarāja may sound, it evolved as an outcome of a practical need for the consolidation of the royal power gained by Jayavarman II after a period of division and chaos. It was in order to assure his position as emperor, (cakravartin) independent of Java and to establish a supreme government by divine sanction that he summoned a Brahman called Hiranyadāman, to formulate the rules for the worship of the royal god.²

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1. G.Coedès, La divinisation de la royauté dans l'ancien royaume khmer a l'époque d'Angkor , Proceedings of the VIIth Congress for the History of Religions(1950), Amsterdam 1951. p.141f.
 2. A cult resembling the devarāja cult in Cambodia was to be found in Champa and eastern Java. From the inscription of Dong-Duong in Champa (Finot, BEFEO., Vol. IV. p.83), it appears that there was a mystical connection between the god Bhadreśvara (Śiva) and the reigning dynasty. In the Dinaya Inscription of eastern Java a similar relationship can be seen. A common feature in these cases is the presence of a Brahman playing an important part in the connexion between the king and the god; in Champa and eastern Java, R̥ṣi Bhṛgu and R̥ṣi Agastya respectively.

Hiranyadāman taught the king's chaplain, Śivakaivalya,¹ to perform the ritual according to four Tāntric treatises by which the divine right of the king was bestowed upon Jayavarman II.² In practice, this was the Khmer Declaration of Independence.³

Nevertheless it was the religious aspect of the cult associated with the king's dignity and power that kept it alive for centuries. As time went on, the cult which was originally Śivaite in character was adapted to Viṣṇuism and Buddhism, giving rise to images of kings and queens bearing the outward appearance of Śiva, Viṣṇu, a Bodhisattva, Buddha, Lakṣmī or Pārvatī. During the period from the tenth to the thirteenth century, Buddhism was flourishing in Cambodia as well as in Java

1. The king declared that the maternal family of Śivakaivalya should continue to perform this ceremony, every time a king was consecrated. This was the first record of an ecclesiastical hierarchy in Cambodia.
2. Sdok Kak Thom inscription of 1052. See Louis Finot, 'L'inscription de Sdok Kak Thom', BEFEO.XV, 2, pp.53-106.
3. As observed by Wolters, "The Devarāja cult on Mount Mahendra was intended to formulate a measurement of the temporal power in religious terms", O.W.Wolters, 'Jayavarman II's military power; the territorial foundation of the Angkor Empire.' JRAS 1973, No.1, p.30.

and Champa; during the reign of Jayavarman VII (1181-1218 A.D.) when Buddhism became the royal religion, the devarāja cult assumed a Buddhist garb. Instead of the gold līṅga of the preceding reigns a Buddha image of 3 metres in height¹ called Buddharāja was installed in place of devarāja in the great central tower in the Bayon (centre of the later Angkor rebuilt by Jayavarman VII).

Briggs has come to the conclusion that the syncretism of Mahāyānism with State Śivaism (Maheśvara associated with the līṅga) resulted in the development of a Buddharāja and its substitution for the devarāja.² Briggs also points out that the syncretism of Śivaism and Viṣṇuism during the reign of Sūryavarman II resulted in the substitution of a Viṣṇurāja for the devarāja and the adoption of the pyramid form for the Vaiṣṇava sanctuary of Angkor Wat.

However, it was easier for Buddhism to get absorbed into the existing Śiva cult than for Vaiṣṇavism, the reason being Kamraten jagat, an equivalent of Jagadīśvara

1. Uncovered in 1933, BEFEO.XXXIII, p.1117.

2. L.P.Briggs, 'The Syncretism of Religions in S.E.Asia, especially in the Khmer Empire'. Journal of the Amer. Or. Soc. Vol.71, Yale University Press, USA. 1951. pp.230-249.

or Lokeśvara could be well applied to the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva Lokeśvara or Lokeśa, Coedès observes:

"Mieux encore que les Vaiṣṇavas, les Bouddhistes pouvaient faire leur un culte dont les racines se développaient sous un terrain où la confusion entre Śivaïsme et Bouddhisme était facile. Si Kamraten jagat est bien un équivalent de Jagadīśvara, l'épigraphie nous enseigne que ce vocable pouvait s'appliquer aussi bien à Śiva qu'à cette divinité équivoque nommée Lokeśvara ou Lokeśa, dans laquelle on hésite souvent à reconnaître Śiva ou le Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara."¹

The studies on the Bayon reveal that the Bayon was originally dedicated to the Bodhisattva Lokeśvara as represented by the figure of Lokeśvara found in the stone faces which adorn the towers of the Bayon in the image of Jayavarman VII with whom he is conceived to have been united.²

1. G. Coedès, 'Note sur l'apothéose...'

2. Louis Finot, Lokeśvara en Indochine, Extrait des Études Asiatiques, publiées à l'occasion du 25e Anniversaire de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, Hanoi, 1925, p.216.

Mus states that the four faces of the fifty or more towers of the Bayon represent the Bodhisattva Lokeśvara Samantamukha (lit. faces on all sides). The four faces represent, all directions and the many towers apparently each represent a province or religious or political centre of a province in the kingdom. These faces which are also in the image of Jayavarman VII show that Bayon not only had a central image of Jayavarman VII in the guise of Lokeśvara but also outer images representing provinces, thus symbolizing Jayavarman VII's hold on the entire kingdom from the centre outwards.¹

Further a small number of statues which represent the king in the form of a perfect Buddha has also been recovered from the central chapel of the Bayon.²

Inscriptions of Jayavarman VII also reveal the king's wish for Buddhahood.

"... Even if guilty of repeated offences,

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1. Paul Mus, 'Symbolisme a'Angkor Thom. Le grand miracle du Bayon', Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1936, pp.57-68.
 2. Ibid., and also see Philippe Stern, Les Monuments Khmers du Bayon et Jayavarman VII, Publ. Musée Guimet, IX, 1965, pp. 189-194 and pl. 194-200.

the residents of this place should not be punished: but those who take pleasure in doing harm to living beings should be punished without mercy. With immense compassion for the welfare of the world the king expresses this vow, 'By the merit of this good work, may I be able to save all beings that are plunged into the ocean of existence.'¹

According to the Tà Prohm inscription, Jayavarman VII erected a statue of his mother adorned with gems and consecrated it as the image of the Mother of Jinas i.e. Prajñāpāramitā.² The inscription further says that the king founded the town Rājavibhāra and dedicated it to the maintenance of the "Mother of the Lord of the Munis". In the same inscription, it is also said that the son of the king expressed the wish that his mother might become a Buddha.³

An original aspect of Cambodian religion, was that the worship of deities was intimately bound up with the king

1. Translated from the French version in:

M.L.Finot, 'L'inscription Sanskrite de Say-Fong', in BEFEO, Vol.III, 1903, pp.29,30,33.

2. G.Coedès, "La Stèle de Tà-prohm", BEFEO, 1906, pp.44-86.

3. Ibid., stanza-145.

or with distinguished personages.¹ The apotheosis of kings in various forms reflected the narrowing down of the gap further and further between the king and the dieties and the gradual merging of the two institutions into one. It was customary to describe the god of a temple by the name of its founder, for instance, when Indravarman dedicated a temple to Śiva, the god was known as Indreśvara.² When a king or a prominent person died, he was commemorated by a statue which represented the features of the king and the attributes of his favourite god. Another practice was that when a king died a posthumous title was given to him - a title which indicated that he had gone to the spiritual abode of his deity, Paramaviṣṇuloka, Buddhaloka, Śivaloka or Brahmaloka. The posthumous title of Indravarman II was Paramabuddhaloka. Rudravarman IV of Champa was known by the title Brahmaloka.³

1. G. Coedès, Bulletin de la Commission Archéologique de l'Indo-Chine, 1911, p.38; 1913, p.81.

2. The same practice is occasionally found in India. Thus, the temples founded by king Vijayāditya and the two queens Lokamahādevī and Trailokyamahādevī were known as Vijayeśvara, Lokeśvara and Trailokeśvara respectively. (Ep. Indica, Vol. III., pp.1. ff). A practice similar to this, in that the name of the temple was described by the name of the founder, existed also in Ceylon, e.g. Kasubgiri vehera, built by Kasub (Kassapa).

3. Finot, Les inscriptions de Mi-Son, pp.959-961.

The posthumous title of Jayavarman IV was Paramaśiva-pada while that of Sūryavarman II was Paramaviṣṇuloka. Nirvānapada and Mahāparamasaugata were posthumous titles given to Buddhist kings. Sūryavarman I was known by the posthumous title Nirvānapada¹ while Jayavarman VII was known by the posthumous title Mahāparamasaugata.²

Similar observations apply to Champa and Java, too, in that, though Śivaism was predominant, Mahāyāna Buddhism occupied an important part in the royal religion. The kings of Champa seem to have been well aware of the Bodhisattva ideal. Indravarman II³ was a great patron of Buddhism and wished to lead all his subjects to the "yoke and abode of Buddha," to "the city of deliverance".⁴ Titles relating to the Bodhisattva ideal too seem to have been in use in Champa. Paramabodhisattva was a title used by kings in Champa.

1. H.G. Quaritch Wales, Siamese State ceremonies, p.30

2. 'Le temple d'Īśvarapura', École Française d'Extrême Orient, Mémoires Archéologique, I. Paris, 1926, p.91, n.2.

3. Probably he was the builder of the Mahāyānist Buddhist Shrines of Dong Duong dedicated to God Lokeśvara.

4. BEFEO., 1904, pp.85

The syncretism of the two religions, Buddhism and Śivaism,¹ that was present in Cambodia, Champa and Java is further reflected in the emergence of the fascinating idea of 'Śiva-Buddha', the simultaneous incarnation of Śiva and Buddha in the king. The first indication of this as given in the Nāgarakrētāgama, a Javanese poem of the fourteenth century is found with reference to king Viṣṇuvardhana of Singhasari (c.1248-1268) who was, after his death deified as both Śiva and Buddha at Waleri and Tajaghu (Cardi Tago) respectively.² A much clearer example, however, is that of king Kṛtanagara (1268-1292) who was deified as 'Śiva-Buddha',³ a title

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1. Eliot thinks that the type of religion practised in this manner was not a mixture but Buddhism of a late Mahāyānist type(HB., p.168). Though it was then believed that Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were identical with Brahmanic deities, the images discovered in or near the ruins were Mahāyāna Buddhas or Bodhisattvas with their spouses.
 2. Nāgarakrētāgama- Lot dicht van Prapanjtja op Koning Rasadjanagara, ed. J. Brandes, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1902, XLI,4. T.G.T. Pigeaud, Java in the fourteenth century, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1960. (text) I,p.31, (trans)III, p.47.
 3. Nāgarakrētāgama, XLIII,5.

given to him even during his life time if we may believe the Pararaton¹ (a book of kings of Tumapel and Majapahit written towards the end of the fifteenth century). The temple where king Kṛtanagara was worshipped was known as the Śivabuddhālaya in which the lower story was dedicated to Śiva and the upper to Dhyāni Buddha Akṣobhya.² The king was honoured as an incarnation of Akṣobhya even during his life time and was consecrated as a Jina under the name of Śrī Jñānabajreśvara.³

The compound deity Viṣṇu-Buddha also has been worshipped in Java, as stated in the Kamahāyānikan,⁴ a treatise on Mahāyānism, presumably a paraphrase of a Sanskrit original.

With respect to the development of the Buddha-king cult in the Angkor kingdom, we should mention Coedès's

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1. Pararaton (Ken Arok) of het Boek der Koningen van Tumapel en van Majapahit, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1921, p.24, line 18.
 2. N.J.Krom, Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst, 's-Gravenhage, 1923. II, pp.138-150.
 3. H.Kern, Verspreide Geschriften onder Toesicht Verzameld, VII, 's Gravenhage, 1913-36, pp.189-197, esp.verse 12.
 4. Edited with Trans. and notes by J.Kat, 's Gravenhage, 1910

statement that the decline and fall of the Khmer Empire may be due to the introduction of Sinhalese Buddhism.

Coedès remarks:

"Buddhism of the Lesser Vehicle, which was fundamentally antipathetic to the conception of individual personality and which even went so far as to deny its existence, could not but destroy the flowering of such an aristocratic cult, which gathered together the people only for the purpose of worshipping the god-king and his great chiefs. Perhaps this was one of the causes of the rapid decline of the Khmer Empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. From the time that the sovereign ceased to be Śiva descended to earth, or the living Buddha like Jayavarman VII, the kings ceased to inspire the supreme religious respect which had enabled them to be such powerful rulers. Undermined by the spirit of Sinhalese Buddhism, the prestige of the king diminished, his temporal power crumbled. The god-king was knocked down from his altar, and it was the twilight of both gods and kings."¹

In saying this he assumes that Sinhalese Buddhism was other-worldly in comparison with the this-worldly Mahāyāna Buddhism that prevailed in Cambodia prior to

1. G.Coedès, Angkor, an introduction, Oxford University Press, 1963, p.32.

this period. In this, he is making the mistake common to many scholars of assuming that Sinhalese Buddhism was identical in practice with the Pali canon. This of course is not true, and as we have observed earlier in this chapter, the Bodhisattva ideal of kingship was fostered in Ceylon as an ideological instrument to bolster the this-worldly temporal power of the king. Thus, when Sinhalese Buddhism entered Cambodia in the thirteenth century it did so presumably with a fully developed concept of the Bodhisattva ideal of the king. Thus the Bodhisattva cult of the Sinhalese Buddhism would have easily adapted to the religious strand it replaced; in many respects, the Buddha-king cult was similar to the Bodhisattva-king cult. The adjustment in the political and religious fields in Cambodia in this regard would have been similar to the adjustments that Cambodian state, and religious organs successfully made when they changed over from Śivaism to Buddhism a few centuries earlier. Thus in our view, Coedès's simplistic explanation for the fall of the Khmer Empire as caused by the introduction of Sinhalese Buddhism cannot be upheld. It is extremely unlikely that a religious doctrine that had provided an ideology of such potent usefulness for exercising the

rule of the king for nearly one and a half millennia in Ceylon, and later during many centuries in Burma and Thailand, would have failed to do a similar service in Cambodia. Responsibility for the fall of the Khmer Empire, we believe, must be laid on other factors than Sinhalese Buddhism.

We have briefly traced in the preceding pages the development of the Bodhisattva cult in the neighbouring Buddhist lands of South East Asia. In this we have attempted to show two different ways of development of the concept in two different cultural areas, respectively those under the influence of Ceylon Buddhism and those which were previously Hindu Colonies such as Cambodia, Java and Champa. In the latter case, the Bodhisattva cult developed directly out of the Hindu cults associated with the king, for example, the devarāja cult. The introduction of Buddhism resulted purely in the transfer of attitudes and beliefs associated with the god to those associated with the Bodhisattva king. In the case of Burma and Thailand the emergence of the Bodhisattva cult was due to its introduction from Ceylon subsequent to these countries adopting Sinhalese Buddhism.

We would also like to point out another distinction

in the Bodhisattva cult on doctrinal grounds between Theravāda and Mahāyāna countries. The Theravāda doctrine of attainment of Buddhahood is strictly elitist, in contrast to Mahāyāna where many can aspire to Buddhahood. The exclusive nature of the wish to be a future Buddha in the Theravāda lends itself to be used to enhance the authority of a king. The king in identifying himself with a Bodhisattva emphasizes his unique position and provides religious sanction to his feudal authority. In a purely Mahāyāna situation where all beings can aspire to Buddhahood, a king aspiring to Buddhahood does not have much of an exclusive character and does not increase his authority over his subjects, who themselves can presumably be aspiring to Buddhahood. Thus it seems that the Bodhisattva cult of kingship is more likely to arise and can add extra legitimacy to the authority of a king in a country with a predominantly Theravāda framework, where Mahāyāna influence exists, than in a purely Mahāyāna country.

In claiming that a Bodhisattva cult could arise better under a predominantly Theravāda framework, certain qualifying remarks have to be made. The only Bodhisattva that the Theravādins recognized was Maitreya. Therefore,

a Bodhisattva cult in a pure Theravāda context should take the form of the king claiming to be the future Buddha Maitreya. We have shown above that in the Theravāda countries considered here, namely Ceylon, Burma and Thailand, this was not generally the case. However, it should be pointed out that the time when the Bodhisattva cult matured in Ceylon, from the seventh to the tenth century, was a period of heavy Mahāyāna influence. It was also a time when the feudal structure of Ceylon was being strengthened and monastic landlordism was emerging as an important facet of the feudal state. It is apparent therefore that the Bodhisattva cult was borrowed from Mahāyāna during the period (as a part of the general borrowings from Mahāyāna) and was added to the prevailing concepts of kingship. Such a concept which emphasized the exclusive nature of the king as well as enhanced his authority would have been of benefit to the Theravāda monastic establishment which was an intimate part of the feudal order. In this connection, it is to be noted that Ceylon remained basically a Theravāda country inspite of strong Mahāyāna influence.

Thus although Burma was previously under the strong influence of Mahāyāna due to its religious and cultural

relations with the Pāla dynasty of Bengal,¹ it developed a Bodhisattva cult of kingship only after the introduction of Sinhalese Buddhism. As another example for the other side of this argument, we may cite the Talang Tuwo (Palembang) inscription of Śrī Vijaya where king Jayanāśa together with his subjects aspired to Buddhahood.² It is

1. Cf. G.H.Luce, Old Burma, p.16.

2. During the inauguration of a large park for the use of all living beings, the king pronounced the prāṇi-dhāna that they enjoy "whatever is planted here, coconuts, arecanuts ... that there arise in them the bodhicitta and love of the Three Jewels ... that they acquire the vajraśarīra of the Mahāsattva ... and that they finally attain anuttarābhisamyaksamvodhi". (Text and French trans. by Coedès 'Les inscriptions malaises de Çrīvijaya' in BEFEO., XXX, 1930, pp. 38ff.) This inscription dated 684 A.D., according to Coedès provides the oldest evidence for the prevalence of Mahāyāna in Indonesia and Indo-China.

It is also interesting to note that during the time of this inscription, cultural influences of Mahāyānist character from Ceylon were being transmitted to Śrī Vijaya. Gosh has identified a Bodhisattva image in Sumatra of the seventh century as being of the style of Ceylon Bodhisattva images of the same period. See D.Gosh, 'Two Bodhisattva images from Ceylon and Śrī Vijaya', J. of Gr. India Soc., IV, 1937, pp.125-127.

evident that this instance cannot be taken as an example of a Bodhisattva cult of kingship, since here the king is on an equal plane with his subjects as common seekers of Buddhahood; the king's authority over his subjects is thereby in no way enhanced.

The historical evidence we have presented so far suggests very strongly that it was in Ceylon that the Bodhisattva cult of kingship first emerged. The cult developed in other Buddhist countries of South East Asia at a later time.

Conclusion

Our study tends to prove that Mahāyānism had a continuous influence on Ceylon from the very earliest times to the end of the period considered here.

The orthodox chronicles mention only a few instances of incursion of Mahāyāna ideas, i.e. Vaitulyavāda into Sinhalese Buddhism. It would not, however, be correct to draw a conclusion on the basis of this evidence and to claim that Mahāyāna influence was merely sporadic. The chronicles are, perhaps understandably silent on many important instances of the Mahāyāna influence, for example, it is silent on the importance of such a great figure as Āryadeva. We can take the fifth and the sixth centuries as the 'great hour' of the Mahāvihāra; it was during this period, that major religious works such as Pali commentaries and chronicles were written. Yet in that same period, Sinhalese Buddhism still remained wide open to the infiltration of Mahāyāna ideas. This is born out by Fa-hsien's account of Abhayagiri, the centre of Vaitulyavāda as having almost twice as many adherents as the Mahāvihāra.

During the period immediately following, i.e. the seventh to the tenth century, Ceylon also apparently became a centre for Mahāyānist missionary activities. Thus Amoghavajra who occupied the central position in the dissemination of Tāntric ideas in China was if not by birth, then by his upbringing a Ceylonese; he received religious instructions from Ceylonese Tāntric teachers and also obtained large quantities of religious texts from Ceylon. Eminent Mahāyāna teachers, Vajrabodhi and Ratnākaraśānti visited the island and were afforded royal patronage. This period also witnessed the foundation of a branch of the Abhayagiri Vihāra in Java. It was also during this period that the cult of Mahāyāna gods such as Avalokiteśvara, Tārā, Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi, Vajrasattva, Cundā and Jambhala was introduced. Some of these gods were subject to metamorphoses; thus Avalokiteśvara became Nātha and Saman, a local god, emerged into Samantabhadra. The others vanished as objects of worship.

The earliest extant Sinhalese literature begins from the tenth century. This literature shows extensive influence of the Mahāyāna. Originally the spiritual

goal in the Theravāda was the attainment of arahantship. The Mahāyāna ideal of Buddhahood is often emphasized in the Sinhalese literary works of the period, and warrants the statement that this ideal had been absorbed by Sinhalese writers.

Certain other Mahāyāna concepts penetrated into Sinhalese Buddhism although partly in an undigested form. Thus trikāya, vajrakāya, śūnyatā, karuṇā, prajñā, etc., were adopted by Sinhalese writers and used without much reference to their original philosophical and religious significance. It appears that the basic Theravāda ideas were presented in the framework of Mahāyāna terms, but used within the context of Theravāda tenets.

The Sinhalese writers also pursued with great zeal under strong Mahāyāna influence the cult of Maitreya and the concept of multiple Buddhas. The development of the idea of the ten Bodhisattvas was a local response to the Mahāyāna doctrine of innumerable Bodhisattvas.

Despite the fact that the Mahāyāna had such influence on the religion of the country, there is no systematic Mahāyāna literature in Ceylon. This is undoubtedly due to the acts of suppression culminating in the burning

of books in the third and fourth centuries and again during the invasion of Māgha.

From the twelfth century onwards, the Sinhalese literature has the distinction of having a highly sanskritized vocabulary. This sanskritization could possibly be due to the adoption of Mahāyāna terminology although one cannot entirely rule out the possibility of the influence of Brahmans fleeing Muslim repressions in India. It could even be that the Brahmans fleeing persecution revived scholarly interest in Sanskrit which opened up the gates to Sanskrit Buddhism and which helped in the spread of the Mahāyāna.

Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of the influence, Mahāyānism had on secular life was the emergence of the Bodhisattva cult affecting the conception of kingship. The period during which this concept was formed arrived when feudal relationships in Ceylon were being consolidated and monastic landlordism was emerging as an important factor in the feudal structure; the Bodhisattva ideal was simply used as an ideological tool to enhance the king's authority. In fact, because of the emergence of a joint system of domination

over the rest of the population by the king and the saṅgha, the Bodhisattva cult provided an essential ideological justification for this domination. (We can see an interesting parallel between the conventional Ratnatraya i.e. Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha and the arrangement of the Bodhisattva king, Bodhisattva ideology and the saṅgha.)

The spread of Sinhalese Buddhism to South East Asia also saw the spread of this ideology into other lands. This ideology helped to consolidate the power of the state and the feudal order in these countries. We reject therefore, Coedès's reason for the fall of the Khmer Empire as being due to the introduction of Sinhalese Buddhism, allegedly too ascetic and untainted with mundane matters of state control. We have also shown that the Bodhisattva cult of kingship as an effective instrument for legitimizing a monarch's rule was more likely to emerge in Theravāda countries under the Mahāyāna influence than in purely Mahāyāna countries where the attainment of Buddhahood was given a more liberal interpretation than in the Theravāda countries.

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